



PETLAND

BY

REV. J. G. WOOD





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PETLAND

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THE COLLIE ACTING AS GUIDE.

PETLAND REVISITED

BY THE

REV. J. G. WOOD, M.A., F.L.S., &c.

AUTHOR OF 'HOMES WITHOUT HANDS' 'STRANGE DWELLINGS' 'INSECTS
AT HOME' 'INSECTS ABROAD' 'OUT OF DOORS'
COMMON BRITISH INSECTS' ETC.



WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS ENGRAVED BY G. PEARSON
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2. *THE EFFECT OF THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLE ON THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE*

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PREFACE.



THIS little book is not merely a collection of anecdotes, but is written with a motive and conveys a moral.

I have endeavoured to demonstrate the mental and sympathetic connection which, though so little appreciated, exists universally between man and beast, and is, in fact, the link that unites, through mankind, the spiritual to the material world. Sympathy unites all; animals of different classes. and different habits are drawn together by this potent though gentle bond, and when sympathy is extended to them by man, they all blend together and unite in his more comprehensive nature.

I have also shown that the true character of animals can only be discovered by close and constant companionship, and especially by making them partakers of our hours of recreation, in which both parties can meet for a while upon an equal footing, the instinct of 'play' being implanted alike in man and beast.

Those who will endeavour to use the magic key of sympathy, will find that human affection meets

with a response from inferiors as well as from equals, and that the humblest being which draws the breath of life, possesses a distinctness of individuality and measure of intellectual endowment, which must otherwise have remained dormant and unsuspected.

The first part of the work is devoted to those animals which have been domesticated throughout successive generations, and have no idea of liberty, such as is the lot of their kinsfolk who pass a life which is certainly more free, but ought not to be more happy. I do not recommend that any animal should be taken from its native haunts, unless for the purpose of studying a character which cannot otherwise be observed ; and in such cases I maintain the golden rule, that the creature should feel itself a companion and not a captive.

Let me here remark that no one need be disheartened by a few early failures. The lower animals have been taught by long neglect to fear rather than to love, and hence their first instinct is to suspect. To overcome this innate distrust and to implant confidence is our first duty, and that done, the work of domestication becomes easy.

Thus much for the motive of the work ; the moral will be found throughout its pages.

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P R E T.

CHAPTER I.¹

Pret—His Birth and Parentage—Brought up by Hand—His Education—Kindness to Animals the only mode of bringing out their Good Qualities—Odd Amusements and their Check—Hospitality to Friends—A Cat's Clubhouse—A Feline Dinner Party—Stolen Fruit is sweetest—Jealousy, Curiosity, and Offended Pride—Terrific Combat and its consequences.

THREE YEARS AGO a kind friend presented me with a tiny kitten, the latest scion of a gentle race of cats,

¹ The first five chapters of Pret's biography were written in 1863. Chapter VI. was written exactly twenty years afterwards.

whose mother and grandmother were my familiar acquaintances, and who gave indications of displaying similar qualities of character to those which distinguished his ancestors. When he was only a few weeks old his mother fell ill, and became so weak that she could no longer sustain the charge of her little son, who had therefore to be brought up by hand or to be drowned like the rest of the family. As his mother's mistress knew that the little pussy would be kindly treated under my care, she gave him into my charge, and I took him away.

Poor Minnie, his mother, was evidently aware of my errand, and was very uneasy at my presence, though I had known her since her birth, and we were always very good friends. She haunted the kitten's couch so perseveringly that quite a deeply-laid plot had to be concocted so as to get her out of the way, while I put the little one into a well-padded basket and escaped from the house.

It was rather curious, however, that after I was fairly away, Minnie came back, went to the accustomed basket, gazed up inquiringly at her mistress, called for her kitty, looked for him all over the house, sat down and mewed pitifully for a few moments, and then seemed to comprehend what had happened, and never again appeared to expect the presence of her offspring.

Kitty went through the railway journey without giving any trouble, and only mewed in the minutest

of voices during the subsequent rattling over the stones in a cab, and when I took him out of his basket he seemed perfectly at ease. He was the funniest, tiniest kitten imaginable, with a little round head, an innocent and baby-like expression of countenance, short uncertain legs that always bore him diagonally and broke down three or four times in carrying their owner for a yard, and with a short pointed tail that stuck out straight behind him when he sat in front of the fire, an attitude of which he was, from the first, very fond. His colour, which never materially changed, even to the present time, when his head alone is twice as big as his whole body was when I first had him, is clear French grey, with a bluish bloom, marked tiger-wise with black streaks. A broad stripe of jetty black runs from his head to the end of his tail, the tip of which is black, and the rest ringed with the same colour. The texture of his fur is long, fine, and soft as that of the chinchilla, and as he approached maturity his chest became beautifully white.

After he had been deposited on the hearthrug I poured some milk into a saucer and offered it to him ; but the little thing could not even lap after the manner of cats ; so that I was forced to put him on my knees, hold his head up, and pour milk down his throat out of an egg spoon. In spite, however, of this drawback, he had an excellent appetite, which has never deserted him. Not that he took much milk at

a time, for indeed he was so very little that he could not manage more than two, or perhaps three, egg-spoonfuls at a time ; but he was continually getting hungry, and mewling in a small voice for more milk. The office of nurse was no sinecure, and involved great labour ; but he throve so fast that he soon learned how to lap milk for himself, and so relieved me from the responsibility of feeding him.

His name was now a mooted question, and in order to perpetuate the memory of his ancestry I called him 'Pret,' that having been the abbreviated name of his grandmother 'Prettina', but, at the same time, being a title that would answer equally well for either sex. Moreover, none of her progeny bore so close a resemblance to herself as does her grandson ; and except that he is about three times her size, and the least shade darker in colour, he is now exactly what she was when I first had the pleasure of making her acquaintance—now about six years ago. I am sorry to say that she was always a cat of delicate constitution, and died at a very early age, not having completed her second year.

Pret grew rapidly, as indeed he ought to have done, considering the very fine appetite with which he was blessed, and the ample means which he enjoyed of satisfying it, and soon became one of the oddest and most playful little things conceivable. Beautiful creature as he is now, looking a very monarch among cats as he walks majestically on the

lawn or lies tiger-like in his favourite nest of long grass, I cherish a very kindly remembrance of the days when he was so little and so wicked, and occasionally find myself wishing that he had remained about the size of a moderate rat, and retained the very quaint and eccentric gambols of his early youth. Not but that he is now a very playful, amusing, and comical cat, with intellectual powers of no mean compass ; but the capricious spirits of childhood have necessarily fled, and his dimensions would render many of his early exploits impracticable.

During his first week, the little creature managed to make an accurate survey of the house, scrambled up stairs, tumbled down them, poked his little nose into every corner, investigated a complicated suite of cellars, and made himself master of all the exits and entrances. Of course, he contrived to get under everybody's feet, and, by mistake, was several times kicked downstairs. But he never troubled himself about these casual mischances ; and whenever his tail was trodden upon, or he found himself suddenly launched from the first to the ground floor, he contented himself with a vocal remonstrance, and forgot the accident in five minutes.

From the first moment that Pret came into my possession I determined to teach him no tricks, such as jumping over a stick, or through a hoop, accomplishments which I have imparted to several cats ; but only desired, by continual kindness, to make him

feel thoroughly confident ; and if ever he needed punishment, to manage the correction in such a manner that he should fancy it to be the natural result of the ill deed, without any connection with myself. How this was effected will be presently seen. The consequence of this immunity from bad treatment or cruelty of any kind is, that all his gestures and actions are full of that spirited and yet easy grace which can never be attained by any creature, be it man, beast, or bird, which has once learned to crouch in terror and to fear a harsh tone or an uplifted hand. From a human being the embarrassed and awkward mien is never eradicated until after the lapse of many years, and, in too many cases, remains through life.

Let parents and teachers be assured that the most certain and the quickest way of rearing a generation of liars is to rule through fear, and by the force of mere brute strength. Let them believe one who has had much personal experience, and be sure that harshness and severity are the inevitable parents of deception and underhand dealings, and reduce the pupil to the moral condition of the mere slave, under a harsh taskmaster.

Now Pret has never been beaten or ill-treated, and, in consequence, his demeanour towards me is of that unconstrained ease which is seen in the behaviour of a child to a kind parent. He cannot be happy without me. If anything strikes him as out of the way

or amusing, he must needs fetch me to look at it ; if any strange object startles him, he looks to me for safety ; and if he gets into a difficulty, he does his best to call me to his assistance. If you lift up your hand in a threatening manner, he thinks you are going to play with him, rolls over on his back, and waits for you to begin the game ; or if you pretend to strike him with a stick or whip, he jumps at it, catches it in his paws, bites it, and enjoys his game greatly. Unfortunately very few cats are treated as they deserve to be, and, in consequence, these beautiful and much misunderstood creatures are very seldom seen in their true colours.

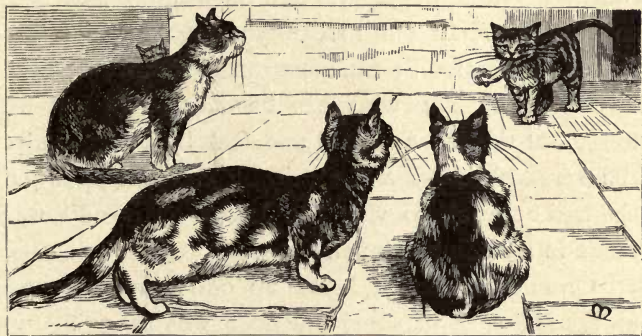
The fearless, confiding movements, the clear, open glance and intelligent expression of a well-treated cat are so different from the furtive, scared look of a poor animal that is hunted about, kicked out of the way, and otherwise ill-treated, that the two creatures hardly seem to belong to the same species. The wild savage of Australia, whose education is a perpetual distrust of everybody and everything, with his restless eye, disgusting habits, and revengeful disposition, is not more unlike the high-born and accomplished European gentleman, than an ill-used cat is unlike one that has been nurtured kindly and never experienced cruelty.

Before this little history comes to a close I shall have something more to say on this subject, but at present we will return to our biography

Pret soon became very fond of his mistress, and would follow her about the house in a manner that was sometimes rather embarrassing ; and, more than once, endangered his own safety through his excess of gaiety. One of his chief amusements was to lie in wait under a chair, and then to jump at her dress as she passed by, clinging with all his feet, and being thus carried round the room. This habit became at last so inveterate, his weight increased so fast, and dresses became so gashed by sharp claws, that we were rather perplexed as to the method of teaching him that he must abandon the amusement. However, the difficulty brought its own solution, as is often the wont of difficulties, and Pret ceased to attack the dresses without being told to do so. He came to us during the summer, while light muslin dresses were worn ; but, when the cold weather began to draw on, silk took the place of muslin, and Pret finding, after a few attempts, that he could not maintain his grasp, but slipped ignominiously on the ground, soon forsook a habit which had ceased to afford him the accustomed pastime, and permitted the dress to pass without molestation.

When he was a few months old he began to scrape acquaintance with other cats, and used to meet them in the back-yard, which, by common consent both of cats and householders, seemed to be the feline clubhouse of the neighbourhood. Now, it was very well for Pret to be social in his habits, but when he

took to hospitality, the consequences became serious. It is true that he never allowed strange cats, no matter how big they might be, to enter the house ; but then he was fond of entertaining his friends in the yard, and was in the habit of bringing his own dinner to the club for the benefit of his acquaintances, and then wanting a second dinner on his own account in the evening. He even went so far as to be disgusted with the



PRET ENTERTAINING HIS FRIENDS.

meals furnished to a neighbouring cat, thinking that cat's-meat was not fit for feline consumption. Acting on this supposition, he was seen to take away the cat's-meat as soon as it was brought by the itinerant purveyor, to carry it into the cellar, bury it under a heap of small-coal, and to take his own dinner upstairs for his friend.

Even these proceedings might have been pardoned,

but Pret's generosity developed so rapidly that we should have been obliged to devise some effectual check had not a removal to another house put an end to its exercise.

Finding that his own meals were not sufficient to entertain his friends in the liberal manner in which he thought himself bound to act, he took to ransacking the larder, into which chamber he contrived to gain admission in spite of many precautions. In vain did we keep the doors shut and the windows fastened, so as to admit air but to exclude any animal larger than a mouse, for Pret always managed to enter the forbidden precincts whenever he chose. At last we found out that he achieved the feat by hiding under the servant's dress and stealthily creeping in when she had occasion to visit the larder. His exit was made in a similar manner.

On one occasion I heard an odd kind of sound on the stairs, as of some one who was dragging up a burden which could with difficulty be lifted. On going to investigate the source of the unwonted sounds, I found that they were caused by Pret, who had made a raid on the larder. He had contrived to drag out of the dish, and halfway upstairs, the entire bone of a leg of mutton ; resting on each stair, in order to get his breath, and then hauling the bone up the succeeding stair. An ant pulling a stick over rough ground presents an exact resemblance to Pret dragging the heavy bone upstairs.

I regret to say that Pret has one fault, probably occasioned by the remembrance of his early hospitalities ; if he can steal anything eatable, he will do so. Not because he is hungry, but merely for his own amusement, does he scent out, steal, and hide something that has been carefully concealed from him ; just as youthful aristocrats were, in former days, accustomed to steal door-knockers and bell-handles, not for any pecuniary value which they might possess, but simply as tangible proofs of their nocturnal prowess. I have known him, just after partaking of copious refreshment, and being unable to eat any more, slip away into the kitchen, sniff about, find out a plaice which the cook had intended for her own dinner, carry it to the coal-cellar, and there hide it. Stolen fruit is proverbially the sweetest ; and Pret certainly thinks that the proverb extends to stolen meat.

He is a very fastidious cat, and does not choose to be imposed upon in the matter of diet. Yet, I can impose upon him as much as I choose, and there are few provisions that I cannot get him to eat, simply by taking advantage of his idiosyncrasies. Meat, that he will sniff at and contemptuously turn his tail upon in the kitchen, he will eat in the dining-room, provided that he thinks that I am making my dinner upon the same diet, while he will display a perfect eagerness on the subject if only he thinks he is stealing the meat. So I sometimes, at dinner-time, have

a little plate set next to my own, with some gravy beef upon it, and, when Pret asks me for some of my dinner, I feed him out of the little plate instead of the large one ; he eats the meat very contentedly, and so both parties are satisfied.

I remember a very absurd instance of this odd trait of character. The cook had broken an egg into a tumbler, and being called out of the kitchen for a moment, Pret, who had been quietly on the watch for an opportunity, jumped on the table, and attacked the egg. Being unable to push his head comfortably to the bottom of the tumbler, he dipped his paw into the yellow liquid, sucked the paw, and took another dip. By the time that the cook came back, the egg was half gone. Cook, being rather angry at the loss of time and trouble, snatched up the tumbler with one hand, and swept Pret aside with the other. Pret, however, considered himself as having the right of conquest to the egg, and instead of running away, stood up for his rights, and, lifting his paw, hit the offending hand with all his force. Seeing that the egg was unfit to be used for culinary purposes, the cook poured it into a saucer, and put it down before the kitten, telling him that as he had taken half, he might as well finish it. But Pret's dignity had been hurt, and he did not choose to accept as a gift that which he considered his own by right. So, turning his back on the saucer, and holding his two inches of tail very perpendicular, he

walked out of the kitchen with an air of offended pride.

Another odd habit was his practice of slipping into the bedroom in the early morning, as soon as the servant brought hot water, climbing upon the bed, and getting under the clothes, where he used to purr like a mill-wheel. Of this luxury, however, he was abruptly deprived by the arrival of a baby, who was thought to have a better right to the coveted nook than even the pet cat.

Pret was naturally jealous of the child, and never forgave his mistress for the possession of the little being who, as he thought, had supplanted him in her affections. At the first sight of the white robes, Pret always vanished under a chair, or slipped out of the room, and no inducement could prevail upon him to look at the little face. If he were lifted up, so as to look into the cradle, he would kick and struggle as if he were being very much hurt, and, with a great jump and an indignant mew, he would leap away, and run to the door.

In spite of his wounded feelings, his curiosity was so intense that he sought every opportunity of looking at the object of his jealousy, without committing himself by being seen to do so. Although, when he thought he was observed, he always turned his head away whenever he passed by the cradle, he would wait until he thought no one was looking at him, and then crawl very slowly towards the cradle, his body

marvellously elongated and his nose stretched forward to its fullest extent, just as if the cradle were full of gunpowder which he expected to explode every moment. When close to the cradle, he would look round to see if he were observed, and if he saw anyone looking at him, would turn his back on the child, sit down, and begin to lick his paws as if he had nothing on his mind except his toilet.

I have already mentioned his rooted objection to allowing any other cat to enter the house. One day a strange cat came into the yard, and desired to force its way into the house. Pret, who was very willing to play with his visitor in the yard, or even to entertain him royally with his own dinner, put in a strong remonstrance to any trespass, and presently proceeded to blows. The two cats had a terrible fight in the yard, and in spite of a heavy shower of rain which was falling, they scratched, and bit, and yelled, and rolled over and over in the mud, as if they were bent upon reproducing the achievements of their Kilkenny predecessors. After a severe battle, Pret vanquished his antagonist, who was a much older and more powerful animal, and drove it off the premises.

He soon made his way to my room, rather damp, but perfectly clean, and after giving him the praise which he deserved for his victory, I let him lie in front of my fire and dry himself. He seemed very proud of his exploit, but had withal a kind of dubious expression about his face, as much as to say that he

was not quite sure of his reception. I thought little of his manner at the time, being, according to custom, very busy, but the peculiar demeanour was fully explained that night. On going into my room, I found a large patch of mud, about the size of a soup-plate between the sheets, in the very middle of the bed, and, on looking further, innumerable dashes and spots of mud were discovered. The fact was, that after the excitement of battle had faded away, and the mud began to dry on his coat, he felt very uncomfortable, and, after vainly endeavouring to rid himself of the encumbrance by ordinary means, had got into the bed and rubbed off the mud between the sheets.



PRET AND THE GREEN CRAB.

CHAPTER II.

The Canaries—Pret introduced to the Birds—How taught to respect them—The Green Crab and the Cat—Pret and the Chameleon—Affectionate Nature of Cats—Friends *versus* Localities—The true Cat-call—Odd Method of killing Mice—Vanity and Desire for Approbation—A clever Cat—The lost Mouse—How Mice are eaten.

ABOUT two or three years before the commencement of this biography, I gave up much time to the breeding of birds, especially canaries, of which I had a rather large stock, between thirty and forty in number, all living in one aviary. The reader may possibly remember that the early history of these birds and

their home has already been given in 'My Feathered Friends,' published by Messrs. Routledge. These birds were in a house at some distance from that which I then occupied, and were not removed to their new domicile until Pret was between three and four months old ; just the most mischievous age for a cat when the thoughtless playful nature of the kitten is still strong within it, and the size and strength are equal to those of a full-grown cat.

Cats of that age are not aware of their weight, strength, and the sharpness of their claws, and, impelled by the wild spirits of their kitten nature, they indulge in antics such as were harmless enough when they were small, but are, at their present time of life, provocative of scratched hands, torn dresses, and broken china. So I was rather nervous about bringing my birds into the house where so remarkably lively an animal as Pret would have access to them. However, the birds must come, and Pret must be taught to respect them. Accordingly, I kept him out of the room while I was engaged in putting together the large cage, which is so made that in five minutes it can be taken to pieces and packed flat like a portfolio, and took care not to let him put his nose into the room until the birds had been restored to their old habitation, and were gaily chirruping in their joy at being released from the small cages in which they had been imprisoned during the erection of their own spacious palace.

Having seen them fairly settled, with their seed and water, and pecking away at some fresh water-cress, I went off for Pret, whom I found in a state of great excitement, caused by hearing the voices of the birds. He was quite puzzled by them, and sat sniffing about, and pricking up first one ear and then another, in utter bewilderment. Chirruping and chattering he could understand well enough, having heard the sparrows in the yard and on the leads, but a singing bird was a novelty to him. I took him in my arms, and carried him into the room where the cage was placed. Of course, the songs and conversation came to an abrupt close as soon as the cat's head was seen to enter the room ; and all the canaries flew to the top of the cage, and there sat in a row, peering anxiously at the intruder.

At the sight of the living birds Pret's eyes sparkled with eagerness, the hair of his back ruffled up like the quills of an angry porcupine, his tail lashed convulsively from side to side, and his whole frame trembled with ardour. So, I held him up to the cage, and introduced him regularly to the birds, telling him that he was not to meddle with yellow-feathered canaries, and that, if he wanted to catch birds, he must restrict himself to the sparrows who wore brown coats, and were intended for cats to eat. Every time that he made a movement towards the birds, which always occurred whenever one of the canaries changed its place, I checked him firmly and drew him back. In

fine, I kept him in front of the cage until his fur had settled to its wonted smoothness, his tail had ceased its rapid jerks, and he could endure the sight of a moving canary without showing any sign of disturbance.

There was one rather curious result of the experiment, namely, that the excitement was sufficiently powerful to affect his health, and for a day or two he evidently suffered from the reaction. However, he soon learned that canaries were to be held sacred, and therefore refrained from touching them, though the temptation was at times very serious. At last, whenever he came into the room, he was accustomed to turn his head away from the cage, which stood on one side of the door, and so put himself as far as possible away from the alluring prospect.

It took some time, however, to accustom him to the birds, and during the first few days after their arrival he was several times rather irresolute, and sat on the floor, in front of the cage, looking with a longing eye upon its inmates. Suspecting the course of conduct which he would pursue, and knowing that feline nature was liable to weakness, I had provided against such an emergency, as every teacher ought to do, whether his pupil be boy, girl, bird, or beast. My desk was placed in the same room with the cage, and, of course, Pret must needs spend the greater part of the day under my table—a habit which could not be permitted if he did not learn to leave the birds

completely undisturbed. So I procured a glass tube about eighteen inches long, and made a few dozen pellets of gutta-percha, which just fitted the bore of the tube. These instruments were kept by the side of my desk, and as soon as I saw Pret staring at the birds and his tail beginning to wave, I quietly took the tube and a pellet, and waiting until he made some overt demonstration, I blew the pellet through the tube and hit him on the head.

As I did not stir from my seat, Pret of course thought that the blow was inflicted by the birds, dropped his tail, and crept very humbly under my table. I took care to use these missiles for no other purpose than to admonish Pret of his duty; and it was very funny to see how he would seat himself before the cage, begin to jerk his tail, and then, as soon as a bird chirped, how he would duck his head in expectance of the blow, and run off as fast as his legs would carry him. The pellets were about two-thirds the size of sweet peas, and were therefore large enough to give a sharp rap, but not to inflict any injury.

At last, he learned to consider the birds as his natural allies, and though he would sit close to the cage, would never attempt to disturb them. During last winter, he took rather an odd fancy. I had made him up a warm bed of hay and carpet in a large hamper, just within the loft, at the top of the house. Pret however seemed after a while to feel dull at night

without some companionship, took all his bedding out of the hamper, and in some mode or other got it down a flight of stairs, along a passage, and into the room where the birds were kept. He then arranged the hay beside the cage, and insisted on sleeping there instead of using the bed which had been provided for him. At first I felt rather nervous for the birds, but soon found that there was not the slightest danger. Pret and the canaries were very good friends, and I have often seen the cat sitting on the domed wire-roof of the cage, and the birds chirruping and singing below, without being in the least disturbed by the proximity of a neighbour who might have been so dangerous if he had chosen to exert his powers in a wrong direction.

Having succeeded so well in cultivating a friendship between the cat and the birds, I thought I would try the effect of various creatures upon him.

While taking a short holiday at the seaside I was of course separated from Pret, much to his discomfort. He disapproved of my conduct very strongly, and for a day or two made a great fuss at the door of my room. I did not forget him ; and, at the conclusion of my last visit, I determined to bring Pret a present from the sea. It was a large and very lively green crab, for I was curious to know what Pret would think of so strange a creature. So I put the creature in a basket in spite of its menacing claws, gave it a

quantity of wet seaweed so as to keep its gills moist, and brought it to London.

Pret, of course, came to welcome me on my return, and I produced the crab for his benefit, putting it on the floor, and allowing it to go where it chose. At first sight of this odd-looking creature, as it walked along like a great green spider, with claws held threateningly in the air, Pret thought he would run away. Curiosity however equalled terror, and then he thought he would stay where he was. Presently terror was overcome by curiosity, and then he thought he would run after the crab, which he did in a very absurd manner, greatly inquisitive and half frightened. Just as Pret had never seen a crab, so the crab had never seen a cat, and having no curiosity at all, ran away as fast as it could scramble.

I hardly know which was the cleverer in this chase, but think that the crab carried off the palm. It was true that Pret would occasionally knock it over by a smart pat ; but then it was nothing the worse for the accident, recovered its feet, and trundled off to find some hiding-place. It was wonderfully quick-sighted, for there was not an article of furniture behind which it did not creep, and on one occasion troubled Pret sadly by climbing between an ottoman and the wall.

Green crabs bear captivity badly, or I should have liked to cultivate a better acquaintance between the cat and the crustacean. Poor crabby died in a few

days, much regretted, and his shell is now lying on my study table.

Since that time he has made two more acquaintances, a chameleon and a chicken-tortoise. I was rather fearful about the experiment with the chameleon, as they are valuable animals, and there was some risk in trusting it with a creature who could kill it with a single pat of its ready paw. I introduced them to each other in the usual manner. The chameleon was quite unconcerned, and rolled its absurd eyes about in the independent manner customary with those reptiles. Pret was rather disconcerted, but examined the creature carefully.

On one occasion the chameleon was missing from the branch on which it lived, and as Pret had been in the room for several hours, I feared that he had eaten the animal. However, I looked about carefully, knowing that in that case some remnants, such as a tail or a leg, would be lying on the floor ; and finding none, I was satisfied that Pret was not to blame. The chameleon made its appearance in a few hours, having been enjoying a walk in the sunshine outside the window. (He did, however, at last kill the chameleon, as will presently be narrated.)

As to the tortoises, he is quite indifferent to them, in spite of their activity ; for they are not common slow-footed land-tortoises, but the swift, active, chicken-tortoises of America, that feed on living prey, and can run or swim with great speed.

It is generally said of cats that they never attach themselves to individuals, but only bear an affection for localities ; and that if the owner of a cat changes residence, and takes the cat to the new house, the animal will run away and return to its former home. Now, the real fact is, that if any cat acts in such a manner, it is a clear proof that pussy has been ill-treated, or at all events neglected. In truth, the cat's nature is extremely affectionate, and if she cannot love an individual, she is forced to transfer her affections to the locality. I know of very many instances where cats have voluntarily followed those whom they loved, and could enumerate a number of such examples. As, however, I have already published several such incidents, and do not choose to repeat myself, I will only mention a few cases that occurred either in my own family or to that of the subject of this biography.

Many years ago we changed our residence from one part of Oxford to another, and having been told that cats had no affection except for localities, my parents thought that they would not distress their cat by taking her into a house which she would not like, and, accordingly, left Nutty at home. But after we had been settled about eight or ten days, Nutty made her appearance among us, and displayed by every means in her power her delight at rejoining her old friends. She was terribly emaciated, and had evidently endured great hardships ; but in a few days

her rich tortoiseshell fur had sleeked itself down, and she had recovered her wonted beauty.

As to Minnie, the mother of my cat, she has led quite a nomad life. I have conveyed her in a half-open basket on a mixed journey of cab, omnibus, and railway, from the house of a friend to that of her mistress, without her displaying the least sign of discomfort. She has travelled from one house to another and one town to another with perfect composure, and when she is brought into a new house she just surveys the room, and sits down contentedly. If she makes any stay, she extends her researches further, and explores the neighbourhood, always contriving to find out at least a front and a back way of gaining admission into her mistress's room. I have known her change houses three times in one month.

As to Pret himself, he has been subjected to a peculiarly severe test. Being taken from his home when a very tiny kitten, and having passed his first year in a house with unlimited cellarage but no accommodation on the upper floors, he was suddenly put into a hamper and taken in a cab to a house of three times the size of that in which he had lived. There was only one cellar, the door of which was kept always fastened, and there were some twelve rooms on the upper floors, and a large loft extending over the whole roof. When I took him out of his basket, poor Pret found himself in a very spacious room, twice as large as any that he had been accustomed

to see, without any carpet, and all the furniture in the chaotic condition which always follows the departure of porters.

Now, to a cat of such fastidious nature as Pret, there could have been few circumstances more embarrassing, and for the first few minutes he was terribly bewildered. However, I took him on my knee, and talked to him while he recovered from his surprise at the strange situation in which he found himself, and then put him down to make his own investigations. His first proceeding was to satisfy himself that the furniture was that to which he was accustomed, and he then looked out of the window, which was very large and opened down to the floor, disclosing a fine prospect of leads, chimney-pots, and a blank wall. Just at that moment a large black cat passed the window, and was impertinent enough to stare into the room. This was enough for Pret. Out he rushed, fought the black cat on the spot, drove it away, and came back again with the mien of conscious victory in every step. I may here mention that he afterwards took advantage of the ground, as a good general ought to do, and, whenever he fought another cat, was accustomed to tilt at his foe with his head and knock him off the leads into the area beneath, a fall of some twenty feet.

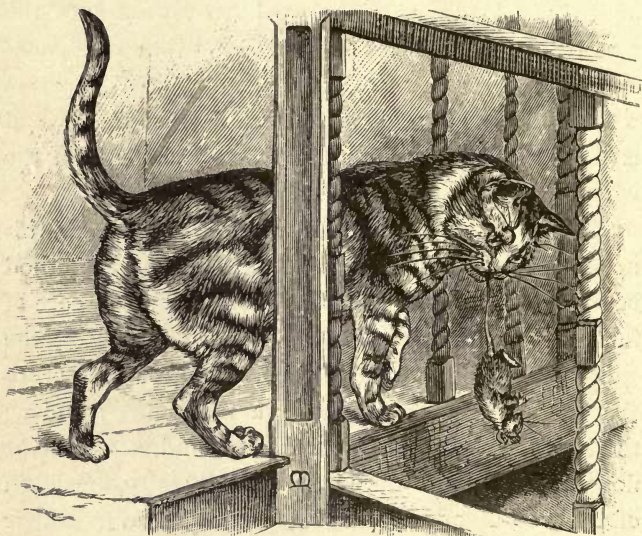
Strange as the house was, he soon made himself master of its resources, and established a series of hiding-places, in which he could conceal himself when

he was mischievously disposed. And as the house was large, and I wanted to manage some mode of summoning him without being obliged to call him by name and so to annoy other persons, I taught him to come to me at the snap of a finger. The promptness with which he answers that simple signal is quite absurd ; and though, since we have removed to the country, and Pret lives in his own 'villa residence' specially built for him, I have been obliged to use a whistle as his call, the finger-snap is still useful, and is employed within the house, where the sound of the whistle might be unpleasant.

It was in the city house that Pret invented his novel and unique method of killing mice—a method which was certainly to be encouraged on the score of humanity. As is the case with many houses, the staircase wound regularly from the ground-floor to the garrets, leaving a 'well' in the centre ; and as the house consisted of five storeys and a basement floor, and the rooms were exceptionally lofty, the depth of the well was considerable. Pret, like an eccentric individual as he is, took a great fancy to the staircase, and was mightily pleased in clattering up and down as if he were running for his life. But he had not been long in the house when he put the staircase to a most unexpected use.

He was always a capital mouser, and, as the mice had enjoyed the freedom of the house for some months before we entered it, he found no lack of

prey. When he had pounced on some unhappy mouse, and enjoyed his usual game of pretending to be asleep, letting it run almost out of reach, and then stretching out a paw and drawing it back again, he proceeded to the next act of the drama. Taking the



PRET AND THE MOUSE.

unfortunate victim by the tip of its tail, he used to convey it to the top of the house, and when he had got to the uppermost landing he would push his head between the bannisters and deliberately drop the mouse through the well, cocking his ears forward to catch the sound of the fall. As soon as he heard the

thump of the mouse's body against the hall floor, he would cry 'Wow!' in a very triumphant tone, and dart downstairs, with his tail erect, to recover his prey. He would then pick it up, canter upstairs, and repeat the process till he was tired. His next proceeding was to take his prey and bring it to me, and he was never satisfied till I had taken the mouse out of his mouth, stroked and admired it, and praised him for his achievement. He would then amuse himself with it for an hour or two, and finish by biting off its head, and leaving both the head and decapitated body at the door of my room.

If I happened to be out of the house he was much displeased, and, if he could bottle up his patience, would wait with the mouse at my door until I returned. Often, however, he became too impatient, and on entering my room I have frequently crushed something soft under my feet, and found it to be a headless mouse, which Pret had left for me. On more than one occasion, when I have forgotten to shut him up at night, he has caught a mouse, and made such a disturbance at my door that I have been obliged to open the door and let him in, knowing that he would make such a scratching and mewling that sleep would be out of the question.

Although so proud of his mouse-catching exploits, he was not above availing himself of extraneous assistance. One day he came mewling to the door of the dining-room in a most piteous manner and as if

terribly anxious about something that weighed on his mind. I opened the door ; but instead of bounding in, as is his usual custom, with a leap of some six feet, he stood mewing at me with his mouth wide open, ran up two or three stairs, put his head through the bannisters, mewed again, and evidently wanted me to follow him. On my making the first step towards the stairs he uttered a loud complacent cry, dashed up the stairs at full speed, awaiting me at each landing, and then running up the succeeding flight.

In this way he led me to the top of the house, and then waited for me at the door of my study. Going at once to a heap of books which were strewed about the floor, after the usual fashion of that room, he began to push his paws under some of the larger volumes, and to utter short, impatient cries. Thinking that his wishes were clear, I began lifting the books one after the other, Pret standing beside me in a state of eager expectation. Just as the last book was lifted, out darted a mouse. Pret sprang at it, swept it into his mouth with a single whisk of his paw, dashed out of the room and downstairs at full speed. This escapade was, however, only the natural ebullition of long pent-up feelings, as he returned nearly as fast as he had run away, and presented himself, all full of purrs, to be congratulated on his success.

Once, while playing with a mouse, he allowed it to run just a little too far, and his intended victim

got under the fender, and then escaped. Poor Pret was disconsolate for days. He completely haunted that fender. He sniffed round it twenty times a day, pushed his paws under it from end to end, cried pitifully in front of it, and was a specimen of true misery. It was useless for me to lift the fender and show him that no mouse was under it; for although he would dash under as it was lifted, and explore the hearthstone in a quick excited manner, the fender was hardly replaced when he was as anxious as ever to crawl under it. He was only pacified by catching another mouse in the room, clearly thinking that his patience had at last been rewarded, and that, after all, the mouse must have been under the fender.

I always have wondered how a cat manages to eat a mouse without suffering one drop of blood to escape. A cat will devour a mouse on clean boards, and not a red stain will show what has happened. It is said, by some authors, that the tearing of the vessels prevents them from bleeding, and if the lacerations were confined to the smaller vessels, this would be true enough; but a cat will bite off the head of a mouse, pull asunder the large vessels about the heart, and yet leave no stain. How does she do it? There is a certain amount of conspicuous red liquid to be accounted for, and yet there are no signs of its existence. The cat certainly does not lick it up, as might be supposed, but simply, by claws and teeth, tears the body in pieces. I have often seen a

jackdaw achieve the same feat, and yet, if a man were to pull in pieces the body of a newly-killed mouse, there would be no lack of sanguinary indications of his occupation.

Pret was not without an under-current of mischief in him, and once exemplified it after a very curious fashion.

A new stair-carpet had been put down, much to his delight, as it was nice and warm to his paws. But, over that carpet was then laid a thin oil-cloth 'protector,' as I believe it is called. It was shining, smooth, and cold to the feet, and Pret objected to it.

In that house the usual order of things was reversed, the kitchen being on the uppermost floor. Pret quietly slipped up the stairs, and got into the sink, where he walked about until his feet were quite wet. Then he paraded among the coals, and then rushed down the stairs and up again, leaving the prints of his blackened paws all over the objectionable article of furniture.

We all know how a cat hates to have its paws wetted, and that Pret should thus do violence to his natural antipathies showed how keenly he resented the substitution of hard cold oil-cloth for soft, warm carpet.



PRET AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER.

CHAPTER III.

Pret's Interests in my Pursuits—Playing with Edged Tools—Literary Tendencies and their Results—Contempt of the Cook—His Sensitive Nature—Another Removal—Remonstrance and Lamentation—New Scenes and Ways—Acclimatised to the Country—Lost Cat—Found Again—Crafty Proceedings—A Chapter of Misfortunes.

THE interest which this odd animal takes in my pursuits is almost ludicrous, though I fear that sundry compositors have had little cause to bless him. If I am doing a little carpentering, he likes to sit within easy reach, so as to see everything that is done, and occasionally pokes his head so close to a sharp-edged tool that I am forced to give him a tap on the nose, which he thinks is quite accidental, and does not lay to my charge. His great amusement, however, is to sit on my table and watch me while writing, an amusement for which his opportunities are almost unbounded. When he was very young he would insist on playing with my pen, hitting it right and left as it scratched over the paper, and producing thereby some wonderful hieroglyphics, that must have caused some astonishment to the compositors, to whom I here tender my apologies.

By the simple ruse of arming the top of the pen

with a few needle-points, Pret was taught that playing with pens was an amusement that could not be permitted, and he therefore changed his plans, and diverted himself by putting out his paw and obliterating every sentence as fast as it was written. After much trouble he was broken of this habit ; the means employed being simply to make a quick dab with the steel pen at his paw whenever it trespassed upon the paper. He was then driven to his wits' end for some mode of mischief connected with pen and ink ; and, lastly, took to sitting on the paper as soon as my hand was removed. Altogether I never knew a cat so fertile in invention, especially when he has set his heart upon any proceeding, and intends to have his own way.

As to the cook, he had the sublimest contempt—not altogether undeserved—for her intellect, and took a pride in disobeying every order that she might give him. If she pursued him he ran away and hid himself behind saucepans, kettles, and the various paraphernalia of the kitchen ; but out of the kitchen he would not go until he chose. Not that he had the least affection for that apartment, considering it to be beneath his dignity ; but if he chose to enter the kitchen, he refused to be turned out, unless by his mistress or myself, we being persons whom he respected, and from whom he would take any order without feeling himself affronted. For, being of a sensitive nature, and accustomed to live much with human beings, he has got

into a habit of watching their ways, and even noting the tone of voice and expression of countenance. If he perceives that anyone is speaking either to or of him in a disrespectful manner, up goes his tail, and with a quietly swaggering step he marches towards the door and looks round for someone to open it. Should, however, no one answer his mute appeal, he disappears under a chair, and declines to show himself again until his wounded feelings have recovered their tone. It is not even necessary to mention his name, for he seems to know instinctively whether he is the object of conversation ; and if he is spoken of in a manner grateful to his feelings, he openly plumes himself on the good opinion that he hears, or sometimes pretends to be asleep, though the slight winking of one eye proves very plainly that he is wide awake.

Just as Pret had completed his third year, another change was in store for him, a change more complete than any he had known, and which might be expected to produce unpleasant effects on an animal that had already settled down into fixed habits. We left London and moved into the country. For several weeks previous to the removal Pret had his suspicions, and plainly showed his dislike of the whole proceeding by his uneasy and restless demeanour, and the dissatisfied air with which he surveyed the partially deserted rooms. Furniture, when packed, was very distasteful to him, and as he always had a great fancy for soft and warm floors, he was by no means pleased

at the disappearance of carpets and the consequent bare boards on which he was obliged to walk. At last the fatal day arrived, and before the strange footsteps of the porters entered the house Pret was safely deposited in a large empty cupboard, together with some milk and a little meat. It was necessary to take this precaution, as he always was nervously afraid of strange footsteps in the house, and could detect with wonderful acuteness a footfall to which he was not accustomed. My own step he knew right well, and would often hear me while yet at some distance from the house, run downstairs, and pilot me up to the dwelling-rooms. But a strange step, no matter how soft it might be, always seemed to affect him in a strange manner, and afflicted him with a fit of nervousness that lasted for a considerable period.

The house is situated in St. John Street, Smithfield, and, in spite of many disadvantages, I took it because I was obliged to live within half a mile of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, to which I was then attached. In those days the cattle market was at the zenith (or, as newspaper writers will have it, the 'apogee') of its glory, and, in consequence, St. John Street, which forms the direct route from Euston Square and Islington to Smithfield, was one of the noisiest thoroughfares in London. I had for some time wondered how it was that Pret was always waiting for me at the door. I was then told that shortly before the hour

at which I might be expected from the Hospital he took up his position on the top of the aquarium and waited. Mostly he heard my step, but sometimes on market days the noise was such that no steps at all could be heard. Even in those cases he was sure to hear the first touch of my latch-key in the door, would utter a little cry, and dash downstairs as fast as he could.

Being so sensitive of ear, it was likely that brewers' draymen should be the especial objects of his dread, and as soon as their heavy boots were heard clumping through the hall, Pret would creep away under the nearest chair, and be very uneasy until their departure. They were good-natured, jolly-faced men enough, but I believe that in Pret's kitten days he got his tail trodden upon by a drayman between whose feet he had incautiously ventured, and from that time associated together the ideas of beer in the cask and an agonised tail. Chimney-sweeps were nearly as detestable to him as draymen, and I shall never forget his look of utter consternation one morning as he fled upstairs after coming unexpectedly on the soot-begrimed face of a chimney-sweeper emerging from a room, with all his brushes on his shoulder, and his eyes and teeth gleaming whitely out of their blackened setting.

In order, therefore, to guard against his escape into the remote recesses of the loft, which would have caused an endless delay in capturing him, Pret was

forced to spend his last days of city life in the cupboard. As soon as the last packages had been placed in the vans Pret was deposited in a basket, with plenty of hay and a piece of carpeting, and in spite of his remonstrances was fastened securely down. For a short time he cried bitterly, but soon appeared to resign himself to his fate, and was perfectly quiet during the journey. When we arrived at the house, after the furniture had been deposited (of course, in spite of the most conspicuous and explicit labels, each article being very carefully placed in the chamber where it could not be of the slightest use), Pret was liberated from his durance, and for a while seemed quite bewildered with his position, the total novelty of everything around him throwing him into a state of nervous trepidation.

A few hours after he had arrived, I drove up to the door, and, when it was opened, found the poor cat in the servant's arms, looking terribly disconsolate. At first, the sound of the wheels and the voice of the driver frightened him, and he tucked his head under the servant's arms, so as to hide his face ; but when I spoke to him, he looked up in a reproachful manner, opened his mouth and wept pitifully, uttering a long low wail as if his very heart were broken. There was no doubt about his meaning. It was a plaintive remonstrance on the cruelty of which I had been guilty. Why did I fasten him into a basket, and take him away from the home where he had been so

happy, to bring him to a strange house without a carpet, without a loft, and with all manner of unaccustomed voices and sounds? I really think that an Australian savage set down in the midst of Charing Cross could not be more bewildered than was Pret when he found himself in the midst of all the noise and confusion incident on settling into a new house, with all the accompaniments of carpenters, blacksmiths, gas-fitters, bricklayers, and the swarming tradesmen's emissaries who swoop in shoals upon the youngest inhabitant like a cloud of locusts upon a newly-sprung wheatfield.

At his old home, he always had a refuge from strangers, for he could get into my study, hide under his mistress's dress, or at least creep under her couch-chair, or, if the intruder should possess a loud voice and heavy step, he could retreat into the loft, and get into all manner of corners. But here was no help for him. In one room the upholsterer's men were banging away at a carpet (which by agreement ought to have been laid down three days before), in another the gas-fitters were pulling up boards, chipping holes through walls, running about with red-hot irons, and calling to each other through the auger holes with which they had perforated the floors. Then, the carpenters were busy with their hammers, completing tasks which ought to have been finished about three or four weeks before; everyone seemed to be dragging something about, and, in fine, the house was

scarcely habitable by a human being, much less by a cat.

So, Pret was obliged to live entirely under my protection. He followed me everywhere, running great risks of being stepped upon, squeezed himself against me, and clung to me tightly whenever a louder noise than usual was heard. By degrees, however, the arrangements were completed, the house became quieter, and Pret pacified.

My next task was to accustom him to the garden, a matter of no small difficulty, for Pret had never seen a garden in his life, never set his foot upon a patch of turf, nor his eyes upon a tree. His only experience of open air was confined to back-yards and housetops, his only exercise consisted in running along the roofs, and he could have had small idea of fresh air, considering the volumes of smoke that always rolled over the only spot where he could indulge in a run. So the poor cat felt himself transported into another world; and when I took him to the door, was absolutely terrified at the wide open space. The greatest danger was that, before he became accustomed to the garden, someone might alarm him, and then he might dart away in a fright, and not be able to find the house again. For the gardens in this locality have no walls, and are only separated from each other by a fence of crossed stakes, or, at the best, a low wooden paling, not four feet high. So, it was quite possible for him to dash

through six or seven gardens, and then find himself on a boy-infested common, where he would certainly be pelted and hunted about, and lose himself hopelessly.

Therefore, I first sat with him at the door, talking quietly to him, and letting him look about while he felt safe on my knee. Then I carried him a few steps into the garden, put him down, and let him run into the house, which he did as if all the dogs in creation were at his tail; frightened evidently at the space around him. Each time that I took him into the garden, I carried him a little further, and in a day or two he could sit by my side on the grass very comfortably, and only ran off if he heard a loud male voice in close proximity. After a few days, I took him all round the house, so as to show him the localities, and explained to him that it would be foolish of him to get into the road through the hedge, or in any way lose himself in strange places. All this time, it must be remembered, he was perfectly free, and might have run away whenever he liked, if he had felt the least wish to get back to his old home.

In about a week, Pret had quite made himself master of the situation, and never committed but one error, namely, getting into the next house, which happened to be empty, and is built in a manner exactly like his proper residence. Having missed him for half a day, I thought he must have got into the wrong house, and so went off in search of him.

After investigating the lower rooms, I ascended the stairs, and snapped my fingers. This sound met with an instantaneous response ; a quick, triumphant purr was heard, then a great pattering of feet, and down came Pret in a desperate hurry, pleased beyond measure at his rescue. He could not make enough of me, and purred, and arched his beautiful tail, and rubbed his head against my hand in expressive though dumb thankfulness. Cat-like, after once having found his way into the empty house, he was continually repeating his visits, and more than once fell into a sad dilemma by his intrusion.

Knowing his ways, I took the precaution of shutting the doors whenever anyone had been looking over the house and left them open, as seems to be the general custom in these parts, all empty houses being confidingly left with open doors, day and night. But Pret was not to be kept out of any place into which he chose to enter, and had discovered a weak point, in the shape of a round aperture leading to the coal-cellar. Usually this aperture is closed by an iron plate, but this covering had been lost, and Pret was accustomed to drop through the hole into the cellar, and thence make his way over the house, where he felt himself sole monarch, and is, I believe, still under the impression that the house belongs to me, and therefore that he has a right to inhabit it. After discovering this mode of entrance, I laid a large stone over it, but Pret pulled the stone aside

and made good his entrance as usual. Lastly, I found a circular iron plate of tolerable size and weight, under which he could not readily insert his claws, and, by loading it with a huge stone, effectually debarred him from entering.

One day, however, some persons who were looking about for a residence inspected the house, and when they went away, left, as usual, the door open. Of course, Pret found it out in a moment, and lost no time in slipping into the house. Presently, however, another party came to look at the premises, to the utter consternation of the cat, who was driven from room to room by them, and ran about, not knowing where to hide himself. I had seen the visitors enter the house, and when Pret did not answer my whistle in the evening, I feared that he must have fled away too far to hear me. All next day he was missing, and about seven or eight o'clock in the evening, I set off in a search after him. In vain did I go all over the house, calling him by whistle and by name, for there was no response. I was just leaving the house, when I gave one farewell whistle, and heard the faintest possible answer in a voice which I knew to be Pret's. Whence the cry came, I could not imagine, but I knew from the intonation that he was almost too frightened even to answer me. I called repeatedly, but to no purpose, traversed the whole house again, and searched in every nook and corner, but could find not a sign of the cat.

After a long interval, as I was standing in the pantry, wholly puzzled as to the best mode of proceeding, the faint and beseeching cry was again heard, apparently from the ceiling. It was however impossible that he could have got there; and at last I thought that he must have crept under some boards, which would conduct sound in a very perplexing manner. So I searched all the floors, occasionally hearing Pret's voice, but being in no way guided by it, until at last, just at the junction of a skirting-board with the floor, I caught a gleam of emerald light, which I thought must proceed from Pret's eyes; so I put my finger through the aperture, and in a moment had the pleasure of feeling Pret's nose against it. But what was to be done? How had he got into such a situation, and how was he to be released? After some trouble I found out the spot where he had made his entrance, but also could see that he could never get out again by the same opening. One of the boards had started from the nails which held it to the joist, and was quite loose at the end. Pret had evidently scurried into the larder as his last refuge, found out the broken board, pushed his way through the aperture, dropped into the space beneath the floor, and there been effectually trapped by the return of the board and the projecting edges of brick, which would allow him to pass in one direction but oppose him when he wished to return, especially as his feet could gain no hold by which he could force

himself through the aperture. The marks of his claws showed that he had vainly endeavoured to escape, and he was at last quite disheartened.

The only course of proceeding was, first, to give him encouragement and let him feel that help was at hand. This was managed by talking to him, letting him rub his face against my finger, and giving him some milk in a teaspoon. After surveying the whole spot, I was obliged to go and fetch my tools and a candle, hoping to find some place where I could get him out without damaging the boards. After much search, I discovered a spot that could be made to communicate with the space under the flooring, and, by dint of careful management, lifted the end of a board, and with a cold chisel cut away some sharp brick and cement edges which were blocking up the aperture. Having completed these arrangements, I called Pret to the place, and, after much encouragement, induced him to try to scramble through the aperture. The poor cat scratched and kicked convulsively, but, having no 'purchase' for his hind feet, could not force himself through the aperture, and was just dropping back with a piteous wail when I caught his head in one hand, and, holding down the board with the other, dragged him through by main force. He was rather hurt and terribly frightened, clinging to me like a drowning man to a pole, and trembling in every limb. I let him lie on my chair, went back and blocked up the aperture, and fondly hoped that I had

stopped all similar misadventures. But it was not to be, for within a short time he met with a still more serious mischance.

I think that there never was a cat with such an aptitude for getting into the most unexpected scrapes. I suppose his heedlessness must partly be occasioned by his confidence in my powers, and that he fancies I am sure to release him from any difficulty into which he may have fallen. Anyone would have thought that this experience must have made him careful, and, indeed, in most animals would have had the effect of making them shun altogether the house in which they had met with such an accident. Pret, however, was quite above learning any lessons of prudence, and in a few weeks after he was extricated from the unpleasant position into which he had forced himself, contrived to get into a far worse scrape in the very same house.

Not having seen him poking his head out of his porch, as is usual when I look out of my study window in the early morning, I thought that he might still be asleep, and did not trouble myself about him. He did not make his appearance all day or in the evening, and when I went out as usual to give him his supper, there was no Pret to be seen or heard. I called him, but in vain; and at last put his plate into his house and went back again, thinking that he might have gone out for a stroll, and would come back when he felt hungry. About eleven o'clock at

night I went to see whether he had taken his supper, but found it untouched. I then felt uneasy about him, especially as a poor cat belonging to a neighbour had that very day come to die on my lawn, with her head cut to pieces with shot, and a leg broken by some cruel gunner. As a last hope I entered the empty house, and had scarcely set foot in it when I heard a wailing cry that I knew could proceed from no throat but Pret's. It issued apparently from one of the upper floors, and I went upstairs accordingly. There it appeared still higher, but when I reached the garret it seemed under my feet. There was no finding out its position, for, though Pret continued to cry most dismally, the sound could not be referred to any particular point. After hunting the voice for nearly two hours, I made out that he had in some manner contrived to get under the boards of the second floor, and had evidently lost himself. A close search showed that in one room a piece of board had been taken up for the use of the gas-fitters, and, hoping that he might find his way out again, I removed the board and set a light near the aperture. His voice sounded very plainly, but he evidently could not reach the opening. However, I had secured a supply of air, and putting a few scraps of meat into the aperture, I went away, hoping that in the dawn he might force his way out. Very early next morning I again paid him a visit, but found that he was still in captivity. Daylight, however, showed that several

other planks had been removed, so, with the help of a carpenter, I got an entire board taken up in each room on that floor.

I knew well that any attempt at rescuing him would be useless as long as the workmen were in the house, for their strange steps and voices would frighten him, and only make him retire further into his hiding-place. However, the workmen went off to their dinners at noon with their usual punctuality, and, leaving the house quiet for three-quarters of an hour until he had quieted down from his alarm, I went to the rescue. As soon as I called him, a pushing and scuffling was heard, and when I put my head between the joists I could just see his eyes in the distance. He had not only got under the boards, but had contrived to push himself through some cross-pieces that were nailed from one joist to another, and could scarcely force his way back again. At last, however, he made a great effort, scrambled through the same aperture, and came to the place where I was waiting for him.

He was very glad to see me, but all in a tremble, and when I took him up he clung to me with all his force. There was no time to lose, for I had scarcely got him out of the front door when the workmen re-entered at the back, and another minute of delay would have caused at least twelve hours' longer imprisonment. I took him to my study, where he would feel quite at ease, went back to the house, and

replaced all the boards. It appeared that the gas-fitters had taken up the boards in the evening and left them loose all night. The workmen in this locality never shut doors ; so Pret must have gone into the house to see what was being done there, and out of curiosity crept into one of the apertures left by the planks that had been removed. The steps of the workmen, who came very early, must have frightened him, and sent him to the furthest extremity of the floor, and so he got nailed down without giving notice of his presence. I hope that this is the last of these misadventures, for the repairs and alterations have been completed, and the house has received its new occupants.

CHAPTER IV.

Barring out—Wires *versus* Cat—How to prefer a Request—Passing the Nets—PRET VILLA—General excitement—The puzzled Bricklayer—The Laurel Hedge—Punctuality at Meals—Hunger and Gratitude—Strange Tastes—Cayenne and Curry—Pret's Vocabulary—Failure of Language—The Universal Tongue—Conversation between Pret and his Mistress.

To look after this funny animal is almost one person's business. He has the most astonishing talent for getting into places where he has not the least business, and can force himself through apertures so small, that no one who did not know him well would take the trouble of guarding against his intrusion. For instance he took a great fancy to the wine-cellar, I believe, because there was plenty of straw, which he could pull about and make into extemporised beds at his good will. We took him out of that cellar three or four times daily, and always shut the door, but in half an hour were sure to find him very comfortably coiled round on his straw bed, and just lazily winking recognition as the door was opened. Everyone accused everyone else of negligence in leaving the door of the cellar open, and everyone of course denied the imputation. At last the mystery was solved. The

cunning fellow had gone round the house and found the little window of the cellar. In order to give air as well as light, this window was glazed with several ventilating panes set diagonally, so as to exclude rain, but to admit air. Pret had examined this window very carefully, had pushed in his feet, hitched his claws over one of the ventilating panes, torn it fairly out of its groove, and walked into the cellar through the aperture.

The second window belonged to the larder, and was made on the same principle, so I knew that his next move would be to repeat the process which had already been so successful, and as I saw his comical head peering anxiously through the panes, it was evident that no time was to be lost. So I made a framework of very strong iron wire, nailed it firmly across the window and effectually baffled him. The precaution was only just taken in time, for shortly afterwards I had the pleasure of seeing him endeavouring to accomplish the meditated deed, poking his nose between the wires, trying to pull them away, and finally mewling in a disconsolate tone at his failure. He evidently felt himself to be deprived of his rights, and considered himself aggrieved by his non-success.

He even achieved a still wickeder feat. As is usually the case with houses that have been uninhabited for some little time, several windows were broken, caused by boys finding the panes admirable

marks, and taking great delight in the sound of crashing glass. This neighbourhood, too, affords peculiar facilities for stone-throwing, the soil consisting of pebbles rounded by the action of water, and lying thickly, of all sizes, from that of a pea to a pebble as large as both fists of a man. The missiles are thus adapted to boys of all ages and varieties of muscular power, and I find that when the stones are too large and heavy even for the stout arm of the incipient butcher, they can still be propelled by the aid of the neck handkerchief used as a sling.

Among the panes which had suffered from the stone-throwing propensities of youth, was one that belonged to a scullery window; that had been restored by a new frame of glass just before our entry into the house. Feeling himself debarred by the iron wire from getting into the wine-cellar or larder, Pret must needs try all the windows within his reach, and finding that the putty which fastened the new panes was still moist, he fairly pushed out the pane with his head, and walked into the house. Fortunately, I had a few yards of stout wire-netting, and nailed it so firmly over the window that no entry could ever be made by that mode of ingress. I had already employed the netting for the purpose of keeping him out of rooms, but without effect. Finding that he was accustomed to creep into the bedrooms through the windows, and get between the

sheets, I fastened some wire-net on the outside. It could not be nailed down, because in such case the windows could not be cleaned, and the lower meshes had accordingly to be hitched over a series of hooks. At first, Pret used to sit, cold and disconsolate, outside the window, wailing for admission in his most melting tones, knowing well that when he cries in a particular manner no one has sufficient strength of mind to resist him. Alone, no single member of the family can withstand that pathetic appeal for a moment, and even when we are all assembled, and backing each other in hard-hearted disregard of his imploring notes, we are sure to yield before many minutes have passed, the door or window is opened, and in comes Pret with a bound and a chuckle.

It is notable that his first process is to dash to the further end of the room, so as to guard against the possibility of being ejected. Moreover, he employs different modes of solicitation, according to the individual upon whose feelings he wishes to operate. Knowing that my compassion is readily roused, he sits outside my door, and utters a plaintive, long-drawn wail. But if he wishes to enter the room where his mistress is sitting, he first mews, and then begins to haul up the carpet with his claws. Anxious to save her furniture, she runs to the spot, with the intention of driving him away, but the moment the door is open, Pret dashes into the room, sits down under a chair, and begins to lick his paws.

He soon discovered that, when no one was in the room, all the crying in the world would have no effect in getting the window open or the obnoxious net removed, so he wisely set to work at the obstacle, matching his own intellect against the net-work, and after a while succeeded in making good his entrance. He was cunning enough to hitch his claws in the meshes, and drag with all his force, until he contrived to slip one mesh off a hook. Another and another followed, and the subtle creature pushed his way between the loosened net and the window-sill. Taught by this experience, I determined to prevent a repetition of the same proceedings, and took care to employ stout, broad-headed nails at every mesh round the margin of the window, twisted the wire round each nail, taking care to stretch the whole fabric until it was nearly as tight as the strings of a racket, and then drove all the nails well home, the twisted ends of the wire being hidden under their broad heads. Pret has tried many times to make his way through the net, but as yet has met with continual and utter failure.

When he had been an inmate of the house for a few weeks, and had proved his acquaintance with the locality by getting into and out of almost every window on both sides, I determined that he should have a residence of his own, and become a freeholder ; so I took one of the boxes that had been employed in the transportation of china, and cleaned it

thoroughly. There was no lid to the box, so I turned it on its side, and boarded up the opening, previously cutting in one of the boards a small aperture through which he might be able to enter or leave his house. The lower boards were only fastened by screws, so that they could be removed, the box cleansed, and the boards replaced. I then made a wooden porch, with deep sides and a sloping roof, so that the rain should not beat into the box, and having arranged his particular piece of carpet on the floor, I put the box in a sheltered corner.

Pret of course had been sitting on his tail while I was at work, gravely inspecting the process, and occasionally running after a shaving that was blown about by the wind. I knew him too well to ask him to enter the box, or to display any desire that he should do so, being quite certain that he would decline at once to have anything to do with it. Pret never could be driven to do anything, and the first approach to coercion is sure to set his back up, both in a physical and a moral sense. But, by one who knows his ways, he can be induced to go anywhere and do anything, the chief point being to let him believe himself in the possession of his free will, and to think that the idea originates with himself.

So, as soon as I had finished his house, and put it in its corner, I sat down in the neighbourhood, took up a newspaper, and pretended to have forgotten all about the box. In a minute or two Pret got up,

made his back into a very high arch, then stretched himself, as if to pull his body straight again, and sauntered off 'promiscuously' towards the box, trying to look as if boxes were the very last things in his mind. Having arrived opposite the porch, he had another arch and another stretch, and looked slyly out of the corner of his eye to see whether I were watching him. Seeing me engaged with the newspaper, he slipped quietly towards the box, poked his head into the panel, drew it out again, and looked round to see if he were watched. Presently I just caught a view of the tip of his tail disappearing under the porch, and in another moment out he came again. I think he went in and out some twenty times in succession, the last time remaining within for half a minute. He then came out and examined all the corners, standing on his hind legs and sniffing, as if to make quite sure of the proper construction, and lastly, jumped on the top, sat down, looked majestically around, and then began to wash his paws with the air of a master.

However pleasant and comfortable this house may be for the summer, it would be but a cold residence in winter ; so I have had a brick house built for him, with a brick and slate porch, and with a sloping roof. The roof is of wood, and can be raised by means of a hinge, and the whole edifice is so made that the original box is placed within the brick walls, and can be lifted out at pleasure, for the purpose of being

cleansed. Pret is mightily fond of his own villa residence, and since I planted a row of laurels in front of his porch, has been quite proud of it. I found that this precaution was quite necessary, as the wind is very strong in this lofty neighbourhood ; and but for some such shelter, would beat unpleasantly into the house. In fine weather, he likes to sit on the roof during the daytime, because the sunbeams make the wooden roof warm for his feet and fur, and he is at the same time sheltered from wind by the walls against which the house is built. As soon, however, as rain falls, or if the sky be cloudy and the position rather cold, he jumps down, walks into his house, and lies there with his chin supported on the door-sill, so that he can look out and see everything that occurs, while he is hidden from sight by the sloping roof and deep walls of his porch, and by the laurel bushes in front of his residence. He always has his supper in his house, I having found a little deep dish that exactly passes into the door, and holds precisely the proper amount for supper.

The erection of 'Pret Villa' has caused quite a sensation in the neighbourhood, and I am sure that a new church or a stone mansion would not have created half the general interest that has been elicited by a building just three feet high. The bricklayer was some time in comprehending the object of the edifice, thinking that I must have been joking with him, and deceiving him with regard to its real destiny. At last,

however, his mind received the idea, and he commenced his work in silence. After a while spent in reflection, he gave vent to two remarks: first, that he 'had been in the trade a many years, and never built a house for a cat afore;' and second, that 'the cat ought to think hisself a lucky un.' The man went to dinner with the usual punctuality of workmen at that hour, and from that moment the fame of Pret Villa spread abroad. On various pretexts, all kinds of persons have inspected the premises. Two men and a boy were required to deliver a message to the bricklayer, and I believe that the popular impression is hardly favourable to my sanity.

Pret's appreciation of time is really wonderful, and seems to be an inherited faculty, his grandmother having been famous for a similar capacity. Exactly at the proper hour Pret is to be found waiting at the proper door, and, if he is unable to obtain admission into the house, he takes good care to make such a disturbance without that those who happen to be unpunctual are strongly reminded of their delinquency. The change of habits incident to the difference between a town and a country life perplexed him much at first, but he soon learned to accommodate himself to circumstances, and he is now quite as accurate in his measurement of time as when he lived in London.

Perhaps the most notable example of punctuality is the certainty of his attendance at his own porch

exactly at the time for his supper. At half-past nine P.M., to a minute, Pret expects that his supper will be ready for him ; and if it should be rather later than usual he goes round to every door and window, and what with scratching at the panels, bumping his head against the windows, and uttering very loud and plaintive remonstrances, no one is likely to get any peace until Pret has had his supper. Only last week I thought that I would finish a letter before I gave him his accustomed meal, and went to my study for the purpose ; Pret, however, was too sharp for me, and I had hardly sat down to the desk before a quick patter was heard on the stairs, then a great bumping against the door, and then a sharp impatient cry. So I had to leave my letter and go with him to get his supper.

He is, with regard to his meals, a most grateful cat, and, however hungry he may be, never thinks of eating until he has purred his thanks, and rubbed his head against my hand. This trait of character was once displayed in a most affecting manner. One day Pret had been shut up in the loft, on account of a lady visitor who had a strange antipathy to cats, having been frightened about them while in her childhood. I was gone to town on that day, and did not return until after midnight. As I was going upstairs I heard Pret's voice calling me in a very anxious manner, and, on enquiry, I found that the poor cat had been forgotten, and had been shut up during

the whole day without having had a morsel of food or a drop of milk. Of course, I immediately procured some meat and milk for him, and carried it up to him.

The poor creature was half wild with happiness when he heard my footsteps, and on seeing the plate of meat and saucer of milk he flew at them like a mad thing. But scarcely had he lapped a drop of milk when he left the saucer, came up to me with loud purring, and caressed me, as if to express his thanks. Then he went to the plate, but only just touched it with his nose, and again came to thank me for having attended to his wants, both of food and drink. It quite brought the moisture to my eyes to see the affectionate creature, though nearly wild with hunger and thirst, refraining from enjoying his food until he had returned his thanks. I could not help thinking that man might have learned a good lesson in the conduct of this grateful animal, and that the 'brute beast,' to whom man denies a soul and a hereafter, had set a worthy example to many a human being, who enjoys the blessings with which he is surrounded, without even a thought of thanks to the Giver.

It is no easy matter to consult Pret's tastes, for, like his ancestors, he has a very unique palate, eating substances which no cat would be supposed to like. On one occasion, the same cook whose intellect he despised was required to make a curry. She did so ;

and, as we afterwards discovered, forgot the curry powder, and substituted a tablespoonful of Cayenne pepper. The result may be better imagined than described. No one was able to touch a morsel of the burning food, and all the plates were sent away.

In the meanwhile Pret had entered the room, and was standing, according to his wont, at my knee, patting my hand gently to call my attention to him. Being afraid of the effect which the Cayenne pepper would produce on him, I refused to give him any meat ; but as he became very clamorous I took up a small morsel and held it to him, telling him that as he was so troublesome he might have it, and see how he liked it. Pret took the meat, ate it ravenously, and to our entire surprise came back for more. He was positively furious about it. He got on his hind legs, and walked about in a most excited state. He almost howled with impatience, and I could not supply him fast enough to please him.

It has always been the same ; nothing pleases him half so much as a piece of meat well saturated with Cayenne pepper, and he will even leave a fish for such a treat. But all his race are odd cats in the way of diet. His grandmother never could resist bottled stout, provided that it were in a jug ; and she used to drink it by dipping her paw into the liquor, and then licking it off as it dripped from the fur.

No one, who has not made the cat a constant companion, can conceive the various modes in which

it can make its ideas understood, and the curious vocabulary of mixed signs and sounds which it will employ. Pret's two organs of speech are his mouth and his tail ; the latter member being endowed with a curious power of spiral curl like that of the kin-kajou. I never saw any other cat so handy with its tail, and it is really wonderful to see the varied expressions which he can put into its movements.

When he is very comfortable, the black tip of his tail lies on the ground, coiled up like a watch-spring. In this way he will lie when dozing, and if I speak to him he just straightens the tip of his tail and coils it up again, as an acknowledgment of the call, and a hint that he is very sleepy, and does not want to be disturbed. If, however, we begin to talk about him, and especially if we mention him in a disparaging manner, the tail becomes more and more uneasy, is straightened, and jerked indignantly from side to side. At last his patience refuses to hold out, and he rises to his feet, looks around with an air of injured dignity, walks to the door, and requests to be let out.

As to his audible vocabulary, it is tolerably extensive, and to those who know his ways is perfectly expressive. Of course, he mews if he is uncomfortable, purrs when he is happy, and yells when his tail is trodden on, just as all cats do, those being modes of expression as common to the tribe as the coo of a pleased baby or the importunate cry of the same

infant when suffering from one of the many afflictions incident to babyhood—sounds which are universally uttered by the incipient human being, whether born in Australia, Africa, or Kamtschatka. When children begin to talk, they separate themselves from millions of their fellow-beings by the diverse nature of the language in which the first words are uttered ; but all babies cry alike, and for them the confusion of Babel has none effect. Everyone can understand a baby, and most persons can make a baby understand in return, though there certainly are some few awkward beings who would apparently as soon face a live lion as a live baby ; and when the little thing begins to talk in that universal language which has passed down to us in its pristine perfection from the very earliest days of humanity, they are quite tongue-tied, and sit looking bashful and constrained, and get very red if they venture to address a word to the object of their fear. I once heard a remark from an illiterate person, who visited France for the first time in her life, that it was very clever of the children to speak French so well, but that it was a great comfort to hear the babies cry in good hearty English.

We don't exactly know what was the language spoken in Paradise, though the Basques maintain themselves to be the possessors of that ancient tongue, the Euskara, in which there are twenty-six moods of verbs, where every noun has six nominatives and twelve cases, where even the letters of the

alphabet are declined like nouns and conjugated like verbs, and which no mortals but themselves are ever able to learn. Still, whatever may have been that primæval language, be sure that Eve talked to her little ones in exactly the same baby language as is employed by modern mothers of the present day, and that the infant answered her caresses with precisely the same cries and cooings as the child of whose birth we read in yesterday's 'Times.' Now, cats have a universal language of their own, which can be easily learned by those who take an interest in the graceful and loving creatures, and they will, besides, contrive to pick up a certain knowledge of human language; so that, between the two, a man and his cat can manage to converse nearly as well as Robinson Crusoe with his man Friday.

As an example of conversations between Pret and ourselves, I will just mention the following cases. Whenever I saw him looking eagerly out of window, his ears pricked forward, and his tail sweeping from side to side, I used to ask him what he was looking at. Now, out of the windows in the London house there were only three moving objects to be seen, namely, sparrows, cats, and occasionally a man on a flat roof, or a servant shaking a carpet on the leads. If the object were a bird, he would make the oddest imaginable chatter, his jaws going like a negro singer's 'bones,' and all the hair along his back ruffling up like that on the neck of a chetah. If strange cats

were approaching, he would utter a few short, sharp mews, or rather yelps, flatten himself on the floor, and begin to rock himself from side to side as if making ready for a spring. But if a man should be observed, he gives a long and faint mew, looks round to see that I am at hand in case of invasion, pokes out his neck to its fullest stretch, and watches with a strange mixture of interest, curiosity, and nervous anxiety.

An amusing incident occurred here a little while since. While I was at my desk, Pret as usual was seated at my elbow, but presently got on my shoulder by way of a convenient plank towards the window-sill, on which he took his place. Presently a garden gate opened at a little distance, and out bounced a great black Newfoundland dog, in exuberant spirits at his release, and leaping about in sheer delight. Pret stared, and made his eyes quite round. 'Well, Pret,' said I, 'what are you looking at?' Pret turned his head, stared at me, then at the dog, then at me again, as if he were a stuffed skin, with a head moved by clockwork. The fact was, that he did not know what to say. He had no word in his vocabulary to express 'Dog,' and was fairly silenced by the want of means to convey a novel idea.

One of the most ridiculous habits in which he indulges, is his custom of remonstrating when he is told to perform any action which does not take his fancy. If, for example, he jumps upon a forbidden chair, and is seen by his mistress, she tells him to

come down ; at first he pretends not to hear, turns his back, and feigns to be occupied in making his toilet. However, a sharp call makes him turn round, and then the order is repeated.

‘Get off that chair,’ says his mistress.

‘Sha’n’t!’ says Pret, with a short yapping sound.

‘Get down,’ says his mistress.

‘Don’t like!’ says Pret, with a couple of dissentient yaps, but still retaining his place.

‘Go down this moment,’ says his mistress, half rising.

Down jumps Pret and makes for the door, uttering a series of discontented and remonstrative yelps, impossible to be expressed on paper, but saying as plainly as possible, ‘Why-can’t-you-let-a-poor-cat-stay-where-he-was-comfortable-I-won’t-stand-it-let-me-out-how-would-you-like-it-yourself?’

Sometimes, during dinner, when he chooses to pretend that he is hungry, and walks about on his hind legs, and rotates like a humming-top and makes nearly as much noise, his mistress mocks him, uses just the same tones of voice, and works him up to a complete pitch of excitement. Poor cat! He quite thinks that he has made a convert to his own opinions, redoubling his efforts to make me compassionate the simulated hunger, and he and his mistress try to out-mew each other. In justice to him, I must say that he always wins; for, in the first place, his gestures are so thoroughly absurd, as he performs a kind of

polka step on his hind feet, mewling loudly as he revolves, and with his fore-paws dangling helplessly in front of his chest, that no one can avoid laughing, while he himself is perfectly serious and in earnest, and will persevere in his dance and his mew until he obtains the desired refreshment.



KITTENS IN BED.

CHAPTER V.

Terrible Accident—Cruelty to Animals—How to keep Cats from Poaching—Cat *versus* Dog—General Character of Cats—Strange Antipathies—Confidence and Affection—How to avoid Scratches—Training of Animals—Finale.

LATELY Pret has met with a sad injury, which I at first attributed to mere accident, but which I fear was caused by thoughtless cruelty. Usually, when in the early morning I opened my study window, which commands a view of Pret Villa, as we call his house, he is on the look-out for his morning milk, which he takes at the same time with my early cup of tea. Mostly, and provided the weather be fine, he is sitting on the garden stairs waiting for me, or lying luxuriously couched in his nest of long grass, which he

has pulled over a little hillock of sandy soil, and by which he is nearly concealed except from a window. If rain should be falling, he remains at home, but as soon as he hears my study window opened, out pops his head, and with a rush and a purr he leaps through the laurel hedge which I planted in front of his porch, and dashes up the stairs in readiness for me to open the door.

But on one morning I missed him, and even when I whistled there was no reply ; so towards the evening I set off in search, and began by examining the empty house, which has already been mentioned. For some time there was silence, but presently I heard a feeble and piteous mew, and there was Pret, standing close to me, holding his left fore-paw in the air, and looking up with a wistful sort of gaze, as if imploring relief. Seeing that he could not put his foot to the ground, I took him up very carefully, and carried him into the light, and then found that his paw was nearly severed from the limb. Nothing could be done for him but to induce him to remain as quiet as possible, so that the severity of the wound might not be increased. So I laid him down very carefully, brought him some milk, and put it down before his porch. Poor Pret, however, was too ill to touch even milk, and he crawled into his house and there lay down. Next morning, however, he was rather better, and drank his milk ; and as I write, about three weeks after the accident, he can put his

foot to the ground, though he cannot rest upon it. Indeed, I cannot but fear that he will never regain the full grace and activity which he formerly possessed.

On first seeing the injured member, I fancied that Pret must have cut himself accidentally by climbing over some wall topped with broken glass. But as, on inquiry, I found that in this locality walls are rare in number, low of pitch, pierced by open-work gates, practically useless for the exclusion of cats or other animals, and have no glass on their tops, it was evident that some other cause must be found. At last I discovered that some cruel person, who objects to cats in his garden, lays traps for the express purpose of enticing the poor animals, and of either killing or maiming them for life. One cat in the immediate neighbourhood has lost one foot entirely, and I have seen the poor creature limping about with the bone protruding from the wound. Another has lost her tail, another the use of a leg, and I have little doubt but that Pret has suffered from the same cause. It may be said that Pret had no business in a strange garden, but it may be urged in reply that though a human trespasser has no business in his neighbour's grounds, the offended proprietor has no right to set man-traps and inflict bodily injury ; and, in my own opinion, a man has no more moral right to inflict needless pain on a cat or a dog than on his fellow-man, though perhaps he may not be amenable to legal penalties for so doing. Far better to shoot a

poor beast at once, than to inflict such torture as must be caused by the crashing teeth of a trap, and, in many cases, to force it to die slowly of pain and starvation. For there are not many cats that are treated as well as Pret, and that could make their way to a quiet home where they would be carefully tended, and never need to use the injured limb. Many cats, especially those that are kept in farmyards, are forced to depend for their living on what they can catch ; and after losing the use of the very instrument with which they seize their prey, would have no means of subsistence to fall back upon, would slink into a corner after the manner of most wounded animals, and there lay themselves down to die. It is, by the way, among the farmyard and barn cats that the most arrant poachers are found ; for a cat is an animal of good taste, and will any day prefer a pheasant-chick, a leveret, or a partridge, to a rat or mouse. Their flesh is more tender, they are easier to be caught, and, when captured, there is more substance within them than is found on a mouse or rat. The havoc which a poaching cat will make among preserves is quite disheartening to the owner of the game. He—for the big-headed, odoriferous Toms are among the chief delinquents—will sally out at night, traverse wonderful distances under cover of the darkness, slip quietly into the preserve, steal upon the game as they are sleeping with their young around them, leap upon the unsuspecting brood, knock them over right and

left with his paws, and feed right regally upon his victims. But a cat that is well and abundantly fed at home very seldom takes the trouble to make such excursions, especially if his principal meal be given to him late in the evening. Pussy then feels far too comfortable to undertake any exertion, goes into his accustomed nook, coils himself round, falls asleep, and leaves the game to their rest.

It is, I know, the popular custom to uphold the character of the dog at the expense of that of the cat, most writers on the subject drawing a parallel between the two animals, wholly to the disadvantage of the latter. For my own part, I think that it is ever a mistake to exalt one creature by depreciating another, as is the custom of some persons, who seem to consider life as a perpetual game at see-saw, where one cannot rise without putting another down, and *vice versa*. It is time that some one should become the champion of a much vilified and entirely misunderstood race, and it is to bring the true character of the cat more prominently before the public that this history has been written. For, although it treats of one individual only, its moral has a universal application, and I am sure that if all cats met with the same consideration that has been extended to the subject of these memoirs, the creatures would better carry out the purpose of their being, and the mutual relation between mankind and themselves would be placed upon the footing which it was intended to hold. I say

boldly, that cats are quite as affectionate as dogs, though not as demonstrative ; and that on special occasions, where circumstances call forth their peculiarities of character, they exhibit an amount of loving forethought of which few animals would be capable.

They are not so easily attached as dogs. Their affections are not easy to win. Their nature is sensitive and nervous to a wonderful degree, and when its finer chords are jarred, the creature shrinks as if it had been struck. The highly nervous organism of the cat is exhibited externally in the copious electricity which can be evolved by merely stroking the fur, the sparks—each a miniature lightning-flash—scintillating among the ruffled hairs like fireflies in a tropical forest ; and the rapid cracklings—each a miniature thunder-clap—sounding like the distant reports of fireworks. Therefore, the cat is peculiarly susceptible of influences which would have no effect whatever upon a less impressive creature, and is attracted or repelled by the very presence of human beings, according to the character of their nervous organisation.

The extraordinary repugnance felt by some persons at the approach of a cat, the face turning pale and the limbs beginning to tremble, even though the creature be unseen, is caused by the abundant electricity with which the animal is charged, and is no mere fancy on the part of the person affected. The cat on her part is equally affected, and the two

natures are as mutually repellent as similar poles of a magnet. The same surcharge of electrical fluid makes the cat a useful associate of the sick, especially those who suffer from nervous prostration, acting in fact as a very mild but constant electric apparatus; and the cat seems to be as much benefited by parting with its electricity as the patient in absorbing it.

Its intuitive perceptions of character are subtle in the extreme, and you will never find a cat approach voluntarily those who dislike the race, or keep long aloof from those who are of a kindly nature and fond of animals. Even Pret, who is one of the most nervous and sensitive of his race, conscious of a strange step long before it can be heard by any human ear, and pressing close to me if he does not like the sound, will always detect friends at a glance, and approach fearlessly to be caressed. I have known an utter stranger to call for the first time, and seen Pret walk up to him and jump on his knees, while he holds himself aloof from many whom he sees habitually.

A former servant, for example, he never could endure, even though she used to give him his breakfast regularly, and occasionally gratify him with casual dainties. The very sound of her name always sent him under a chair, and whenever she took him up he used to drop his tail and hide his head, as if he were ashamed of being seen in such company. She left us when he was about a year old, and more than twelve months afterwards, when she happened

to call at our house, Pret came darting into the room all in a quake, and hid himself under his mistress's dress. The fact was, that he had heard either her voice in the street or recognised her step, and had at once put himself under protection.

To a heavy step Pret had always a great objection, as also to a loud voice, he not having been used to hear either the one or the other in our house.



REPOSE.

It is no easy matter to attach a cat. Any one can attach a dog, and even Bill Sikes had his bulldog, which was fond of him in its own queer fashion. But no cat would have come near a man who would kick her whenever he felt in a bad temper, or who was habitually loud and brutal in manners. Yet, when once a cat's affections have been gained, the entire confidence which she reposes in her friends is really touching, for not only will she entrust herself, but her offspring, to the charge of one in whom she

relies. One cat, whom I knew, but was not my own, always made me her earliest confidant whenever she was blessed with a family, and would persist in bringing her kittens to me, and strewing them casually over my room. The bed was her favourite spot, but if the bed-room door were closed, she would put a couple of kittens in my arm-chair, another on the hearth-rug, and another on the table, and having thus entrusted them to my charge, off she would go and indulge in some recreation. The worst of the matter was, that the owners always drowned the whole litter, and then she used to come and ask me piteously for her missing children, hunting in every spot where she had been accustomed to place them.

It is a thorough error to say that cats are treacherous animals, purring when pleased and scratching when crossed, and the mistake arises from ignorance of the feline nature. A lady, for example, is stroking a cat, who purrs and both seems and is very happy. Pussy, in order to show her appreciation, clasps the caressing hand in both her paws ; the lady, thinking that the cat is angry, draws her hand sharply away, and of course gets scratched by the claws, which are thrown out by the very attitude of the limbs. Moreover, all well-treated cats retain their playfulness, and snatch at anything that is quickly withdrawn, thinking that the movement is a challenge to a game of play. Pret is now as playful as when he was a kitten, dashes at my hands, clasps them, pretends to bite, and plays

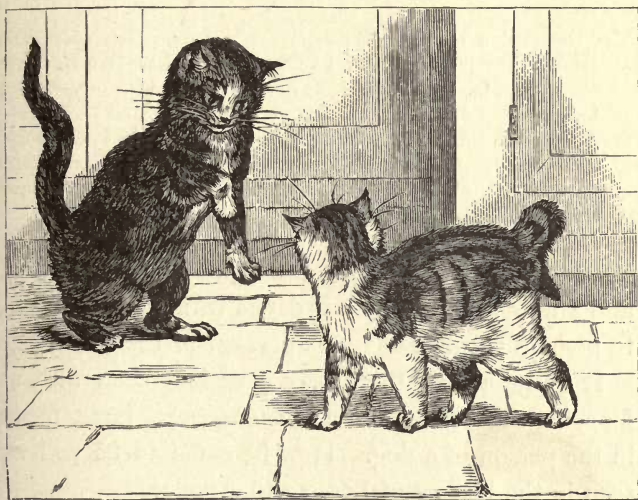
all kinds of gambols. For my part, I tumble him over, box his ears, pull his tail, fling him up in the air, and excite him till he is half mad with fun, and yet my hands are without the least sign of a scratch. Yet, if I were to snatch my hand away suddenly, it would be scratched, because Pret could not withdraw his claws in time to avoid an accident. I may here remark, that if a cat has taken too tight a grasp of the hand, an instantaneous release can be achieved by turning pussy on her back, and rolling her head over heels. In order to regain her feet, she instinctively releases her grasp, and the hand is at once at liberty without being injured.

Cats have several advantages over dogs. For example, they scarcely ever do any damage to furniture, for they move with such consummate address, that they may traverse a table covered with fragile ornaments, and yet break nothing or even leave a trace of their passage. They have no unpleasant smell—a drawback from which no dog is wholly free, however carefully it may be washed and fed—and give a certain air of comfort to a room that can be attained in no other manner. There are few more pleasing domestic sights than a sleek, well-conditioned cat lying on a hearthrug; it tells so much, and is such an indication of the character of her owners. A cat must be well and kindly treated before she will look sleek, and she must find herself fully confident towards her human friends. Should

she be afraid of ill-treatment she will lie under a chair, behind a sofa, or anywhere but in so exposed a situation.

I like to hear a sleeping cat, when touched, utter a quick complacent chuckle, and recompose herself to rest, and always feel that the house is inhabited by gentle and kindly hearts. I like to see a cat follow her owners from one room to another, or accompanying them as they walk in the garden; and especially do I like to see pussy quite unconscious that she *can* be in the way. Then I know she has never been harshly treated, that no one kicks her aside or drives her about, and that if she does get into some place where she has no business, as cats and children always will do, she is gently removed, and the recurrence of the unconscious offence prevented by timely precautions. In fact, every one who owns a cat—as far, that is, as one creature can own another—should treat it as if it were his child; be thoughtful of its wants, encouraging to its affections, kind but firm in all prohibitions, and watchful for its peculiar traits of character. He should be especially careful never to order it to perform any duty without necessity; but, at the same time, if he has once given an order, to insist on absolute obedience. Cats are just like children in that respect; once let them get the upper-hand, once pass over the commission of a forbidden act, and they will lose all respect for you, and you will have fifty times as much trouble as if you had been consistently firm.

Granting that a cat is treated as it ought to be, I know no animal that will better repay the pains taken with it. It is always a quiet and soothing companion, not disturbing the tranquil atmosphere of a sick chamber. If its owner be merry, it will play to his heart's content ; and there is no living creature



KITTENS AT PLAY.

that affords such a compound of marvellous agility, elegance of form, and ever-varying grace of movement, and has withal such an undercurrent of rich comedy. I defy any one to avoid laughing at the pranks of a couple of kittens, or even the gambols of adult cats that have retained their original gaiety.

CHAPTER VI.

PRET AND OTHER CATS.

The Completion of Pret's Biography—His Loss, Restoration, and Death in the Discharge of his Duty—A Cat of the same Tribe—'Tiny' and her son 'Brownie'—Anger and Reconciliation—Feline Language—A Household Pet and his Ways—Cats and Localities—A Mistaken Idea and its Effect upon the Cat—How Cats can find their Friends—London and Country Cats—The Kindly Van-drivers and their 'Puss' Hampers—A Cat's Dream—Biography of 'Thomas Henry'—The two Cat-sisters 'Mimi' and 'Cocotte.'

YEARS have passed since these pages were written, and I now proceed, in accordance with many requests, to give an account of the remainder of Pret's life.

It so happened that, after Pret had been with us for some time, an addition to our household was made in the person of a dog. How he came to us will be seen in the history of Bosco and Apollo.

Bosco was brought into the house, and thereby Pret's dignity was offended past forgiveness. He stared at the dog for some time in utter bewilderment, evidently unable to believe his eyes. That a dog might be in the garden he could understand, but that a dog should be domiciled in the house where he had reigned supreme was not to be tolerated. So he walked slowly out of the room with perpendicular

tail, vanished into Pret Villa, and never entered the house again unless Bosco was out of the way.

Not that he had any particular objection to the dog as a dog. On the contrary, Pret and Bosco were on the best of terms, and would walk up and down the garden together, or eat out of the same dish. Only, if I entered the garden, Bosco had to retreat to the house, for no sooner did I appear, than Pret boxed the dog's ears, cuffed him right and left, drove him away, and then came and talked to me.

Even in the severest frosts of winter he would not enter the house when Bosco was in it; but I made Pret Villa perfectly comfortable by packing the space between the wood and the bricks with straw, and putting plenty of hay into the box itself.

Things having been settled thus amicably, we went on for a year or two without disturbance, when the house became too small for the family, and it was necessary to move into a larger dwelling.

Of course, when everything was arranged for the transit, the first care was to secure Pret. But he had taken alarm—probably having recalled his previous experiences of removal—and was nowhere to be found.

Our successors came into the house a few hours after we left it, and I commended Pret to their sympathies, though I knew well that he would never show himself to strangers. They were very kind putting his food into Pret Villa every night at the

usual hour ; and, as the vessel was always empty in the morning, it was evident that he had eaten it. At last, however, the food was left untouched, and, as time went on, we abandoned all hope of seeing our favourite again.

Several months had passed away, when one afternoon, on returning to the house after a walk, I heard a rush of children's feet, mixed with confused cries, 'Here's Pret! Here's Pret!' 'Pret's come back!'

In the greatest state of excitement they ran into the *kitchen*. I snapped my fingers (the usual call), and Pret sprang from among the children, jumped over the table, leaped into my arms, clung to me as a frightened child clings to its mother, and literally cried with joy.

I lay particular stress on the words 'in the kitchen,' because Pret was a cat of very aristocratic ideas, and, as the reader may remember, flatly declined to enter the kitchen at either of the previous houses. But his joy at finding us again was so great, that he had actually come into the house through the kitchen, and he never afterwards objected to use it as a passage to and from the garden.

In a day or two he had inspected every nook and corner of the house, and, when he had fairly settled down, he resumed his old occupation of mousing.

Finding that in the new house there were few mice, but many rats, he abandoned the mice as

beneath his notice, and took to the nobler sport of rat-killing. He was equally successful as with the mice, but I never could persuade him not to put the dead rats into my bed when I was out of the house and the study door closed.

Before many months had passed, he had cleared the premises of rats, but continued to bring them into the house as before. On investigation, I found that he had traced the animals to their stronghold, and tried to clear that also. This stronghold was at some distance from the end of my garden, and was a hollow place under some old stone and brick stairs, which for many years had been disused. He had frequently been seen hanging about these stairs, and there is little doubt that the rats must have combined against him.

One day he was missing, and did not make his appearance for three days, when he crawled into the house so changed that we scarcely knew him. His beautiful silver-grey fur was all bedraggled and covered with mud, his head was enormously swollen, his ears were in rags, he was quite blind, and all over his head and shoulders were streaks of clotted blood, matting his fur together.

I washed him with soft warm water, and then found out the cause of his state. On his head and neck alone were more than thirty rat-bites, the chisel-edged teeth having cut to the bone. The eyes themselves were untouched, and I had hopes of

saving his life. He being quite unable even to lap, I fed him with warm milk, and made up a bed for him before the fire. Probably the rats had been feeding on some decaying substances, so that their bite was poisonous, for all efforts were of no avail, and Pret died two days after his return.

He was a singularly beautiful creature, his colour being soft silver grey, with a chain of jet black bars from his nose to the tip of his very long tail, which was nearly white, ringed and tipped with black.

The breed is of French origin, and is, I believe, called 'Chinchilla' by fanciers, on account of the softness and colour of the fur. But I know and care nothing about 'fancy' and the points of fancy animals, whether they be cats, dogs, poultry, pigeons, or singing birds.

About a year after his death I saw, in one of the great London squares, a cat so exactly like Pret that I was at first quite startled. I took the liberty of knocking at the door and asking where he came from. I found that not only was he one of the Chinchilla cats, but that he had come from the same part of France as Pret's grandmother.

Since Pret's death I have had several cats, but only one who showed any well-marked character. His mother, 'Tiny,' was an ill-conditioned animal, never purring under any pretence, perpetually growling, often spitting and sometimes scratching. He himself is exactly the opposite—affectionate, gentle,

continually purring, never growling, and seeming to be ignorant that he possesses claws. Even Tiny was fond of him and would sometimes play with him.

They remained on affectionate terms until another batch of kittens appeared, when she took the most unreasonable dislike to him. She made no objections to the loss of all her kittens except one, but that one she guarded from 'Brownie,' as the children called him, with absurd jealousy. If he ventured near the spot where she and the kitten were lying, she flew at him like a fury, boxed his ears, and drove him away.

If he but came in sight, she would growl, set up her back, and spit at him. One day he had hurt her feelings by having a fit and frightening her. Next day she saw her son asleep, and scolded him according to custom. He did not wake, so she went up to him, pushed him with her paw until he awoke, and then spat at him and boxed his ears.

This went on for several days, Tiny scarcely leaving the kitten for a moment, and not allowing herself time to make her toilet, nor to have her accustomed meals.

One day, to my utter astonishment, when Brownie came in sight, instead of scolding him, she called him in her former affectionate tones, went up to him, put her nose close to his, and evidently said something to him.

Brownie then walked off to the kitten, curled himself round it, and lay down. Tiny then went upstairs, asked for some milk, drank it, gave herself an elaborate wash, stretched herself on the hearthrug, and went to sleep.

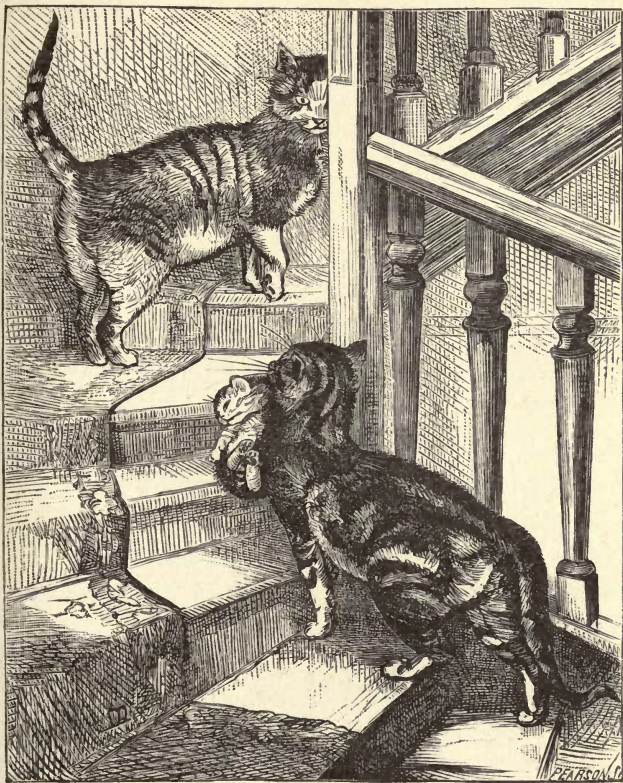
When she awoke, she went down again, picked up the kitten, and carried it into the dining-room, where, after showing it to us, she laid it on the hearthrug.

Every day the same process was repeated, and mother and son were on the best of terms. The kitten, however, grew so fast and became so heavy that Tiny, who, as her name implies, was a small cat, was hardly able to carry it up the stairs, even though she got on the stair above it and hauled it up by its neck.

Again she went to Brownie and had a long talk with him. They went together to the kitten, which Brownie picked up. She then walked upstairs with her tail very upright, while Brownie followed her carrying the kitten just as a nurse carries the baby behind her mistress.

After the death of Tiny, Brownie became the household pet, and is so still.

In the early morning he goes purring round to all the bedrooms so as to give the first greeting to the members of the household, and is overjoyed if he is admitted. He allows himself to be picked up by his tail, or a handful of skin, or by one of his legs, or his



TINY, BROWNIE, AND THE KITTEN.

head, and goes on purring. The youngest child seems to be his chief favourite, and she can do anything with him.

A few days ago I saw the child sitting at the table and reading 'Alice.' Her elbows were on the table, in each hand she held one of Brownie's hind-paws, his fore-paws were crossed on the top of her head, his chin rested on his paws, and he was fast asleep.

She dresses him up in various fantastic costumes, ties caps or bonnets on his head, and a veil over his nose, seats him in her doll's chair, and there he remains purring contentedly until he purrs himself to sleep. She picks him up by his fore- or hind-paws and swings him from side to side. He takes no objection to the process, but lets himself hang loose and limp like a wet cloth, and goes on purring. She ties him round her neck, and he goes to sleep, purring by snatches as he becomes wakeful. She rolls him up like a hedgehog, tucks him under her arm, and he is equally contented with that position. So he is if she hangs him on her arm as a waiter hangs his napkin, and dangles there like the sign of the Golden Fleece over a draper's shop.

But, although he will allow her to take any kind of liberties with him, he never dreams of obeying her. If she calls him, he will not come unless he chooses, and will probably walk off in the opposite direction to show his independence. If she wants him she must go to him, but he flatly declines to go to her.

Sometimes he thinks that he has really allowed matters to go too far. In such cases he wriggles out of the children's hold, makes for my eldest son and runs up him, knowing that he will find a refuge and protection. But, in his struggles to escape, he never thinks of using his claws as his mother would have done, neither does he growl or spit after her fashion. He contents himself with uttering a short yelp, which signifies that he really cannot stand any more pulling about.

It is very strange, but he never would take the trouble of catching mice. If a mouse should come into the room, and run just before his nose, he contemplates it with serene curiosity, but never stretches out a paw to arrest it. His mother did all she could to teach him, but it was useless. Similarly, he seems to think that sparrows are very pretty to look at, but, as far as I know, he never caught bird or mouse in his life.

The capability possessed by cats of opening doors and ringing bells is well known. Brownie possesses the former faculty, but once found himself a little too clever.

My study is a forbidden region to him, and in consequence he was always hankering to get into it. One day, after I had been seen to go out of the house, the study door was found to be locked on the inside, and no answer was made to repeated knockings.

The family being naturally very anxious as to the

cause of this mysterious occurrence, an entrance was made at one of the windows. Just in front of the door sat Brownie, contemplating the lock with exceeding bewilderment. He had tried to open the door, but had caught the key instead of the handle, and so had locked himself in.

Not long ago, a most absurd scene was witnessed. Brownie is not easily excited, being saturated with the idea that the universe, including food and milk, was made for him. But the smell of fish, especially while being cooked, destroys his equanimity entirely, and he exercises all his ingenuity to get at the dainty. One day some unaccountable sounds were heard in the back kitchen. They proceeded from Brownie. He had in vain tried to make his way into the larder where the fish was kept, and, being baffled, had watched for another opportunity. In the back kitchen there is a gas stove, which is much used for cooking, especially in the summer time. The fish had been placed in the stove, and, by some unexplained process, Brownie had contrived to open the stove door and drag out the fish. Having succeeded in the theft, he proceeded to eat his booty; but it was too hot for him, and so he was standing over it, not daring to touch it, but spitting, scolding, and growling at it because it burned his nose.

I have already mentioned the erroneous idea that cats only care for localities and feel no affection for individuals.

Pret, as has been seen, left his own comfortable home, and contrived to find his way to me, and the late Mr. W. Chambers told me a still more extraordinary action of a cat.

Her master had lived on the west coast of Scotland, and had taken a farm on the east coast. There were no cross railways in those days, so that the man had to take all his goods and implements by ship, and, thinking to do the cat a kindness, he left her in her old home.

Some weeks after he had settled down in his farm he came home from his work, and found his cat waiting for him. How she found out his residence, and how she crossed the wild country, which she had never seen, and which is cut up by lakes and mountains, it is impossible to say.

In London, during the summer and autumn those who belong to the fashionable world feel obliged to leave town until the next 'season.' Most of them go abroad, and some visit their country houses. All of them take their dogs with them, but scarcely one family in a hundred bestows a thought upon the cat.

The houses are closed, no one lives in them except a 'caretaker' on board wages, and the cat must either starve or steal. In the country, the cat takes to a different life ; but in either case she is wretched while she lives, and is nearly sure to die a painful death.

The cat, accustomed to her daily meals, her fire-

side, and her comfortable bed, finds herself suddenly without food and without a home.

In London, she is too often snapped up by those horrible wretches who make a living by killing cats and selling their skins. It is thought to be necessary that the skin should be stripped from the body while it is still warm, and too many instances have been known where the cat has been nailed while alive to a



THE ABANDONED CAT.

board, the skin torn off the body, and the still breathing animal flung aside to die.

Should she escape such a fate—or a still worse, that of falling into the hands of those who dissect living creatures for the sake of ‘science’—she becomes among cats what the ‘street arab’ is among children. She prowls about the squares, catching birds when she

can ; when there are no birds, slinking into houses and stealing, fearing the voice or step of a human being, and totally altered in looks and character.

In the country, she mostly becomes a poacher, and her life is almost always ended by the trap or the keeper's gun. The number of cats that are thus killed every year is almost beyond belief. There is no doubt that a cat which has taken to a wild life is a terrible poacher, and that she destroys great quantities of game.

Now, in the eyes of the keeper, all living creatures are divided into two classes, 'game' and 'vermin.' The former are sacred beings, the latter have to be poisoned, or trapped, or shot. Nothing but pheasants, partridges, and hares are allowed to exist in a preserve, and I really believe that if most keepers could have their own way, not a redbreast or a wren would be allowed to enter a preserve, for fear they might interfere with the game.

Such are some of the miseries which befall deserted cats. It would be a thousand times more merciful to kill the cat by a rapid death, such as by shooting or drowning, than to leave it behind.

In the suburbs of any large city, where the population is always shifting, there are great numbers of these deserted cats.

Not far from a house that I formerly occupied, a family had suddenly abandoned their house. A few days afterwards a cat was heard perpetually crying as if in pain, and the sound went on for two days

without cessation. We could not find out whence it proceeded, but at last one of my children espied it from an upper window.

By the aid of an opera-glass, I made out that it had been caught in a noose, and had hitched the string in a crack on the top of a wooden fence at the end of a neighbouring garden. It was continually trying to escape, but was always stopped by the noose, which had worn a deep ring round the body, and was evidently causing terrible pain.

I went to the house, to ask leave to go into the garden and release the cat. Meanwhile, two old ladies, who inhabited the house, had discovered the cat, and, not seeing the string, were trying to drive it away, fearing that it was mad. However, on finding the real state of the case, although the animal was really half mad with pain, terror, hunger, and thirst, they courageously cut the string, and took the cat from the fence. They gave it some milk, tended it carefully, and when I called a few days afterwards it was doing well.

The poor animal had belonged to the absconding neighbours, and I found that the two kind-hearted ladies had in the house two more cats which had been deserted, and to which they had given a home. They have since left the place, but they took all three cats with them.

Not long afterwards, I myself moved into my present house, which is only a couple of hundred

yards or so from the other. There were the two cats 'Tiny' and 'Brownie,' the latter then a three months' kitten, and we locked them in a cupboard while the men were at work.

When the furniture had been shifted into the new house, my son fetched the two cats in his arms. The men laughed at him and said that it was useless to bring the cats, as they would never stay in a new house, especially when they were so close to the old one. We had no such fears. The two cats sat quietly while they were being carried, and settled down at once in their new home. Of course, they went all over the house and sniffed at every hole and corner of it, and having done so, accepted their position, and never went back to their former domicile.

I hope that people are now beginning to learn that if they love the cat, it will love them, and be happy in any home which they may inhabit. Several kind-hearted van-drivers always take with them an empty hamper marked 'Puss,' and if there should be cats in the house from which they are taking furniture for removal, see that Pussy is secured in the hamper before they begin to move the furniture.

That dogs dream in their sleep is a fact well known by dog owners who make comparisons of their pets, and the Scotch shepherds have an idea that if a man will put his cap on the head of a dreaming dog, and wear it when he goes to bed, he will have the same dream as his dog did. But I do not remember any account

of a cat's dream, and therefore think that the following narrative is valuable as well as interesting.

'As I was sitting by the fire at night, the cat, reposing on the hearthrug, began to growl, and went on growling increasingly.

'At last, I turned to the door, expecting to see some strange cat enter; but nothing appeared, and yet the growling increased. At last the growls reached an explosive crisis, and the animal started up with the characteristic "spit" at an adversary, and retired to the other side of the rug.

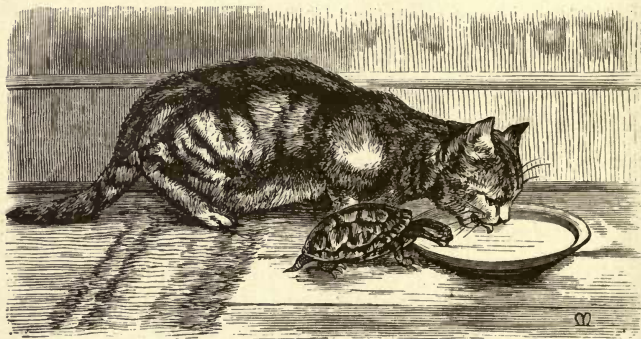
'At the same time, I felt her remove one of her paws from my foot, which was slightly pressing upon it. But, all the time of the growling, the cat never opened her eyes. I am disposed, therefore, to infer that a cat can dream. The slight pressure of my foot had not been painful enough to wake her, but had given her a sort of nightmare which the limited range of her intellect converted into that horrid brute which sometimes comes and robs her of her fish-tails and fins.'

We can recognise in these details the phenomenon, not only of dreaming, but of talking in the sleep. The cat spoke with perfect plainness in the only language which she knew, and her angry remonstrances uttered in her sleep were thoroughly intelligible to her mistress. I will conclude the history of cat pets with the account of an animal which seems to have been as quaint in his way as my 'Pret,' and possibly with a more decided dash of eccentricity.

‘When we were children, we had a very old cat who used to bring us toads and frogs as presents, and be delighted if we accepted them.

‘She was too old to have kittens, but used to gather together our little dolls, and curl herself around them, lying on her back as if they were kittens and wanted feeding.

‘Shortly after I began housekeeping, we had a cat who used to come up, wake us every morning regu-



THOMAS HENRY AND MARY ANN.

larly, and then get into bed. At that time he was a kitten. We called him “Thomas Henry,” and he was a darling.

‘At that time I also possessed a very pretty small tortoise, called “Mary Ann.” Thomas Henry was devoted to her. They used to drink milk out of the same saucer, and when they had finished, Thomas Henry would lick the milk off Mary Ann’s head and

neck, and tidy her up generally. She was so used to the process that she only used to blink her eyes, and did not even trouble herself to draw in her head.

‘When evening came, and Mary Ann was too sleepy to toddle about with him, he used to have a game of his own invention.

‘He used to pick up Mary Ann in his arms, and see how far he could run on his hind-legs before letting her fall. I have often seen him run six or seven yards before letting her down. This absurd game always went on in a passage with an oil-cloth floor, so that the quick scurrying footsteps could be heard at some distance, and every tumble made a great bang.

‘Whenever I went out, this dear little cat had to be shut up. Otherwise he would be sure to follow me on the garden wall and spring on my shoulder at the gate. Or he would slip along the road for some distance and then spring out on me.

‘He was often invited out to tea with me, and sat at the table like the little gentleman that he was. He sometimes received small presents of cream, &c., and was generally made much of by my friends. But even cream palled upon him after a time, and he would go and eat the potato-peels that a neighbour had put out for the sparrows.

‘This used to amuse my friend, but not her cross-grained maid, Emma, who hated Thomas Henry almost as much as she did me. Emma would throw

stones at him from round the corner, but the amiable Thomas Henry thought it extremely kind of her, and would run after the stones and try to catch them.

‘Then she would sally forth with a big broom, and attack him with it. But he was equally delighted with that movement, and only stood on his hind-legs and tried to play with the broom; so what *could* Emma do to a cat like that? I believe that she hated us all the more because we were both only amused at her tantrums.

‘Thomas Henry always made his appearance at afternoon tea, and if a lady visitor indulged in bonnet-strings he felt himself bound to untie them. He was dreadfully jealous if I wrote or sewed, and scattered my cotton and things savagely when he could get at them, his eyes staring with rage and his hair all on end.

‘He always heard my husband’s step at the gate before I did, even if he were sound asleep, and would scamper out to meet him and scramble-on to his shoulder.

‘During dinner-time he used to sit on my shoulder, and was in the habit of adroitly clawing anything that he fancied off my fork, and conveying it to his mouth without dropping it or soiling my dress in the least. He always caught in his paws anything thrown to him, and would sit on end to eat it. He had taught himself to sit up and beg.’ I have seen a cat belonging to the late Mr. E. Fordham Flower

act in exactly the same way. She sat on the arm of the chair while he was carving, but transferred herself to his shoulder when he began his own dinner, and helped herself exactly as described by my correspondent.

‘At last, Thomas Henry was poisoned, and died in convulsions after three days’ dreadful illness. I wept, and so did my husband.’

The following story of the two sister cats Cocotte and Mimi exhibits a curious mixture of character, and it is worthy of notice that just as my cat Tiny induced her son to take charge of her young offspring, Mimi had evidently induced her sister to perform a similar, but more onerous, office.

‘Some years ago, I brought my mother two Persian kittens.

‘One, which we called “Cocotte,” became a lovely silver grey, without any markings except the dark lines round each leg. I never saw such fine, soft fur, and her eyes were just the colour and brilliancy of topaz. The other, called “Mimi,” was dark tabby above and white below, with an enormously bushy tail and large frill.

‘Mimi immediately contracted the deepest attachment to the cook, never left her all day, was constantly purring and rubbing herself against her dress, sat on her shoulder when the cook took a chair, and lay on her bed at night. Whenever she expected a litter of kittens, she always went to her friend, took

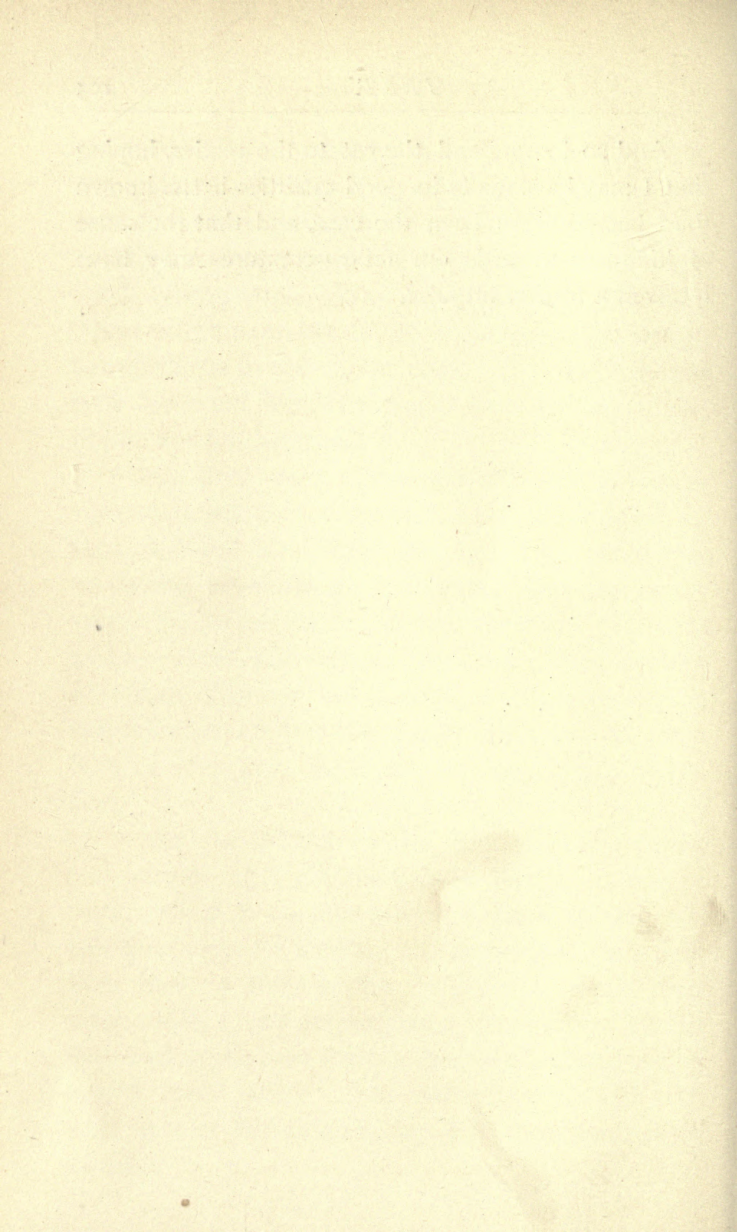
her dress in her mouth, led her up to the bedroom, and pointed out the spot where she expected the cook to make up a couch for her.

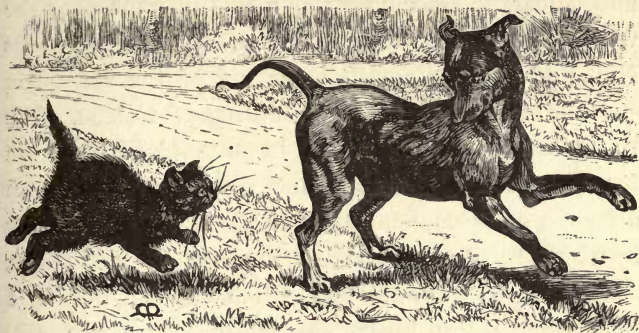
‘One day poor Cookie was attacked with a slight touch of scarlatina. Whereupon faithless Mimi declined to go near her, swore at her, and transferred her affections to the deputy cook. In a few days the cook recovered, but Mimi would have nothing to say to her, and cut her dead.

‘Next time when a young family was expected, she adjourned to the hayloft ; and, on climbing up there, I found Mrs. Mimi surrounded by her brood, all taking nourishment. Thinking that my father might like to see them, I picked them up, put them into my apron, and carried them off. Their mother offered no objection, but Cocotte, who was also in the loft, followed me into the house, which was at some little distance from the stable, mewing pitifully all the time.

‘I put the kittens on the drawing-room carpet, and as soon as I did so, Cocotte darted at one of them, picked it up, and carried it back to the loft. She then came for another, and so brought the whole litter back to their mother, in order to finish their meal which I had interrupted. Then, after making their toilets, she took them to her own bed, and curled herself round them. The mother never took the least care of her children, but left them entirely to Cocotte.’

And so I commend the cat to the reader, hoping that I may have made its good qualities better known than has hitherto been the case, and that the cause of kindness towards our fellow-creatures may have received a further impulse.





THE BLACK KITTEN AND SNAP.

ROUGHIE.

CHAPTER I.

My Canine Friends—Dogs and their Names—Snap and Lion—Dogs *versus* Beggars—Beggars = Thieves—Roughie—His First Exploit—Narrow Escape from Suicide—His Handsome Looks—His Perverse Nature—Daintiness Corrected—Dogs and their Food—Lapdogs, their Mistresses and their Doctors—A Paradox and a Truth.

I HAVE been on terms of friendship with many dogs, though the first of whom I had legal possession was the subject of the present memoir.¹

The first dog with whom I formed an acquaintance belonged to some kind friends, to whose house I went on a visit when a little boy of four or five years old,

¹ The history of 'Roughie' was written in 1863.

and, I fear, acted the part of a small tyrant over the whole household. The name of my first dog was Nell, and yet the creature was not of the softer sex—Nell being in fact a diminutive of Nelson. We struck up an alliance, and became playfellows on the spot, rolling and tumbling over each other with a feeling of perfect equality on both sides. He was a white terrier dog, about the size of a donkey, according to my childish recollections; but if I may believe my hosts, several of whom are still living, Nelson was no bigger than an ordinary terrier after all.

I wish that there could be a little more originality in the world, were it only displayed in the invention of appropriate names for dogs. I have known three Nelsons, only one of whom had the least claim to such a title. That solitary exception was a huge, rollicking Newfoundland dog, who would have spent all his life in the water had he been permitted, and who has jumped clean over the parapet of a bridge into a river when there was no legitimate access to the water. Nelson the Third was a grand old mastiff, nearly toothless with age when I knew him, scarcely able even to eat the hard biscuits with which we used to gratify him, and liking to accompany us to the pastry-cooks' shops, in hopes of obtaining some softer viands. He was a brave and venerable dog, but entertained quite an objection to water, and had certainly no right to the nautical name which he bore.

I have not the least doubt but that there are hundreds of canine Nelsons alive at the present time, and that not one per cent. has the least qualification for the name.

At college, of course, I had a large acquaintance among dogs, which in several cases ripened into friendship. The biographies of several of these college dogs are already before the public, so that I need but mention the names of Crab (a most appropriate name), Bob, and my never-to-be-forgotten Rory, who, I really believe, was the quintessence of all dogs that have existed since dogs were first made. I think he died of too much intellect, and am sure that if he had walked into the room on his hind-legs, and wished us good morning, none of us would have been very much surprised.

A wide interregnum occurred between Rory and my next canine friends, two of whom, I am glad to say, are very appropriately named.

Snap is a black-and-tan terrier, who lives three or four houses from my own domicile, and is of just the quick mercurial temperament that is indicated by his name. He often comes bounding over the intervening fences to pay me a visit, and cursorily to look for bones and Spanish chestnuts. The former articles he finds near Pret Villa, and the latter he picks up under the tree, shaking them adroitly out of their prickly coverings.

On the 5th of November last, as we were amusing

ourselves by roasting some chestnuts for private consumption, Snap, accompanied by two of his special playfellows, a little boy and girl, came to pay us a visit. We talked to the children for a while, and they presently took their leave, together with Snap. Our ideas then turned towards our chestnuts, and we were rather surprised to find that they had wholly vanished. Presently we discovered a heap of empty shells under the table, and found that the crafty dog had carried the fruit away to a spot where he was hidden from observation, and there had quietly consumed it. At first we thought that he had eaten the whole of the chestnuts, but on further search we found that he had left one single chestnut, which proved to be a bad one.

From my window I can see the games that take place between the three playfellows. The children haul the dog about by the tail, they drag his jaws open, they pull his ears till he shrieks, they push him over and roll on him, and he never thinks of biting them. On the contrary, he thoroughly enjoys the sport, knocks them down in his turn, and jumps on them when they are prostrate ; in fact, the rule of the game seems to be, that as they are all rolling in a promiscuous heap, the one who happens to emerge first immediately jumps on the two others.

There is also a black kitten that takes part in their games, and were it not that the little creature voluntarily runs to meet the children and Snap, a bystander would be disposed to think that she was

rather hardly used. She gets picked up by the children and carried about the garden, tucked under one arm, and not even struggling to escape. Snap makes after her, seizes her in his jaws, and rolls her on the ground till she scratches his face, when he jumps up and runs away, and the kitten after him. Snap has rubbed all the fur off her neck with his teeth, but she seems to be quite content to go without it, and is always ready to challenge him to a game of play.

Snap is a great ally of mine, and I have only once been obliged to correct his exuberant spirits, namely, when he was dancing in a most excited state round the parrot cage and trying to push it over, Polly at the same time making vicious pecks at his fore feet. Sometimes, when he fetches a great bone from some unknown store, and sits down to eat it on my lawn, I am obliged to shoot him from my window with a pellet bow, the effect of which is to send him off yelping in a direful state of alarm. But he has not the least idea as to the source of the sudden pang, and never dreams of connecting it with me.

He was rather disconcerted with some fireworks. The crackers troubled him sadly as they bounced about in the air, for he did not know in what direction he ought to bark, and before he could make up his mind, the cracker had again exploded in quite another place.

Lion, my other canine friend, has also some right to his name, being a large, tawny dog, a cross

between the mastiff and bloodhound. He looks a terribly formidable beast, with a deep jaw and a set of terrible white teeth, and *such* a bark. But he is as gentle as a lamb, and as full of play as a kitten ; and, forgetful of his weight and strength, is apt to charge full tilt at his human friends, drive his head against their ribs quite unexpectedly, and tumble them over before they even suspect his presence. Only this morning, as I was playing with a little girl, Lion loomed in the distance, thought he must have his share in the fun, came dashing along to the spot, and projected the child a yard or two by the shock. However, no harm was done, and the dog seemed much more scared at the result of his charge than did the child at feeling herself knocked over by the dog.

On moving out of London and taking a rather isolated house in the country, I was desirous of having a good terrier dog to act as a house-dog, and to bark at the shoals of professional beggars who always assail a new-comer for the first few weeks of his residence, and mark the house in their maps according to the reception with which they meet. Moreover, as burglaries had become unpleasantly frequent, and several gangs had been conducting operations in unpleasant proximity to the neighbourhood, I wanted a good watchful dog to sleep in the house.

There is perhaps nothing that annoys a burglar

so much as a quick-eared, lively little terrier that sleeps inside the house. He has supreme contempt for the biggest and fiercest dogs that are kept in kennels outside the house, for he has stores of subtle poisons, and can quietly destroy an outdoor dog whenever he likes. But a little noisy terrier inside the house is his abhorrence. There is no silencing the little beast, for as soon as its quick instinct tells it of the approaching foe, it sets up such a volley of barks, that no one in the house can possibly sleep. It is as brave as a lion, and will dash at the legs of intruders with such rapid courage that its assistance is invaluable in case of actual combat.

So I asked my friends to look out for such a dog, and in due course of time received notice that a capital Skye terrier, named 'Roughie,' was waiting for me, and would be delivered up whenever I called for it. So, on the appointed day, I set off for the dog, and fell in love with him on the spot. He was, and is, a picture of a dog, mustard-yellow, with black ears, and with hardly a limb perceptible from beneath the mass of hair with which he was covered. I never saw a droller countenance than his, when he sat up and stared his visitor in the face.

On going to untie the cord by which he was fastened to a post, it was found that he had demolished a bank of turf during his residence. No remonstrances could make him cease from his digging, but

it was hardly thought that in so short a time he could have done so much mischief.

He seemed very glad to see me, and, indeed, was so mightily affectionate that he seemed rather to be an old friend than a new acquaintance. He was of course charmed to be permitted to run about, and accompanied me to the railway station with every mark of satisfaction. He whined piteously when I left him in charge of a porter during the time occupied in procuring tickets, and made such a turmoil by way of expressing joy when he saw me again, that anyone might have supposed him to have belonged to me since his birth.

On removing him from the carriage, the station-master straightway fell in love with him, as I had done, and seemed rather envious of his possession ; so did the guard who opened the doors, and the porter who took the tickets,

When he arrived at my house I fastened him to the fence, and made him an extemporised kennel out of an empty box. Here began his unique and remarkable behaviour. It was impossible to make the least calculation respecting his proceedings, or to judge him by other dogs. For example, the post to which his chain was fastened formed part of a snake fence—*i.e.* a fence composed of stakes set obliquely in the ground, and crossing each other, so as to form a kind of dimonad-pattern. Roughie's first proceeding was to walk in and out of the apertures in the fence

until he had twisted his chain round every stake within his reach, and fairly wound himself up to the very chin. Having achieved this feat, he must needs stand half-choked by the collar, with his nose on the ground, and utter loud wailings as a signal of distress. After some little difficulty I contrived to unwind the chain, whereupon Roughie straightway proceeded to repeat the process, and in five minutes was wound up again as tightly as ever.

Finding that as fast as he was released he would embarrass himself again, I was forced to bore a hole through the side of his box, and fasten the chain to it in such a way that the dog could not get through the fence. Next morning, when I entered my study, Roughie began to howl and moan, and on seeing that rain was falling heavily, I thought that the wind must have changed during the night and driven the rain into the box, I having taken especial care to turn it with its open side to leeward. But on looking out of the window, I saw that perverse dog sitting on the outside of his box dripping with water and shivering with cold, wholly unmindful of the dry bed of straw just beneath him, and the sheltering sides of the box in which he ought to have been lying.

He always did it. Whenever the wind fell, and the sun shone out warmly, Roughie used to lie in his straw bed under cover; but no sooner did the cold winds begin to blow and the rain to fall than Roughie got on the roof of his house, and there sat bewailing

his hard lot. I think I have seen many human beings behave in much the same manner ; voluntarily put themselves within reach of avoidable discomfort, and then lament their ill fortune.



ROUGHIE IN THE RAIN.

In order to make him feel satisfied with his new quarters, and to induce him to cease from the pitiful howlings with which he had begun to beguile the time, I gave him some chicken-bones, and made much of him. This treatment, however, was quite a mistake, inasmuch as, having begun with chicken-bones, he made up his mind that he ought to be fed regularly with them, and declined taking any other nourishment. I had already bought some dog-biscuits, and naturally thought that he would be very grateful for them. But

when I came to feed him, he flatly declined the biscuits, and looked another way when I presented them to him. I thought that perhaps he would like to have the biscuits broken smaller, and broke them accordingly. It was all to no purpose, for he took each piece of biscuit out of my hand, laid it down, and asked for another.

He tried all kinds of ruses to rid himself of the obnoxious biscuits, for he evidently understood me when I told him that he might choose between the biscuits and starvation. He poked the pieces under his box, he covered them with straw, he patted them ingeniously into the gravel, he kicked them as far away as his legs could propel them, and was unwearied in his attempts to delude me into the notion that he had eaten the food.

It seemed a very hard-hearted proceeding, and I should not have found courage to persist, but for some knowledge of the ways of dog-doctors. Many a fat, wheezing, waddling, over-fed lapdog is sent to their establishments by the anxious mistress, and is returned in a few weeks, brisk, active, and in perfect health. Nothing is simpler than the treatment. The doctor is summoned to the sick dog, and sees at once the whole case, though he would not be unwise enough to say so. Therefore, he punches the patient in the chest, feels its pulse, shakes his head, and pronounces it a very bad case, requiring careful treatment under his own eye. So he carries off the four-footed patient,

takes it to his establishment, and puts a plate of biscuit before it. Of course, a dog that has been accustomed to feed luxuriously on the breasts and wings of chickens, to lap cream and disdain milk, is not very likely to eat hard biscuit.



THE SICK DOG AT THE DOCTOR'S.

After a few hours, the dog feels hungry and yelps angrily for food, and has the identical biscuit brought afresh. Again it refuses to touch the unaccustomed diet, and will sometimes hold out for several days

before it can bring itself to feed upon such viands. The natural consequence is, that the gross, uncomfortably dyspeptic canine patient rapidly loses the overweening fat with which it was encumbered, regains its original elasticity and vigour, is made to run for daily increasing distances, comes home tired and hungry, and is only too glad to obtain the very food which it formerly disdained. The dog is then returned to its mistress, who cannot sufficiently show her gratitude to the wonderful skill of the doctor.

Having therefore these examples before my mind, I determined that Mr. Roughie should learn to eat biscuit as he ought to do, and in time succeeded. I should have conquered him sooner had he not been able to hold out longer through mistaken feminine benevolence, sundry bones and bits of meat having been surreptitiously conveyed to him. In reality, there was no kindness in the proceeding, for it only prolonged a struggle which could have but one termination, and inflicted on the dog a longer period of suffering. At last, however, the once dainty animal was very thankful for his biscuit, and, having learned that he would be required to eat whatever food was given to him, he would take either biscuit, meat, or bones with equal zest.

I said that I was acting in kindness to the dog, and this is a true statement. Dogs cannot bear over-feeding, and it is really cruel to them to indulge them in their desire for meat and milk.

They are not like the cat tribe, which never lose their beautiful elasticity of limb and activity of body, and only show the effects of good feeding by the soft sleekness of their fur and the gentle expression of their countenances. Dogs, on the contrary, make fat with astonishing rapidity, and the effect of even a single full meal shows itself to an experienced eye.

A very few weeks suffice to make them quite unwieldy and disagreeable, and I think that there is hardly a more pitiful sight than a little, well-bred terrier, which ought to be slim, graceful, full of fiery activity and glowing courage, scarcely still for a moment except when asleep, reduced to the abject condition of an over-fed lapdog. Panting, wheezing, with its body round as a puncheon, and its slender legs standing widely apart, the wretched creature waddles painfully along, and cannot proceed a hundred yards without being obliged to pause and recover its breath. Fortunately, however, the dog loses fat as rapidly as it gains it, and can be starved down to its proper dimensions without the least injury to its constitution.

Cats again, however fat and sleek they may be, are sure to take their proper amount of exercise, either by night or by day. But a fat dog is always a lazy dog, and will not stir a yard further than it is absolutely obliged. A dog should never be allowed to be present at meal-times and eat the scraps which he extorts from his friends at table.

He should never have more than one meal daily, and that solitary meal ought to be less than he would like to eat. It seems almost a paradox, but it is nevertheless a truth, that a dog to be happy and in good health should always be under-fed, and that as he gains in weight he loses in health and the enjoyment of life.

CHAPTER II.

Roughie and the Beggars—Roughie and the Lamb—Disobedience and its Consequences—Roughie and Pret—Propensity for Straying—Sudden Disappearance—An Unexpected Recognition—Roughie turns up again—His New Master—Another Claimant—A Quarrel and a Threat—Despair of Owner—The Problem Solved—Analysis of his Character—Last Tidings.

It will be remembered that my chief object in keeping a dog was to deter beggars from entering my premises. The audacity of these mendicants was almost beyond belief. Six or seven of them, men, women, or boys, would call daily on all kinds of pretexts, and try to gain admission into the house. If warned away from the front they would try to slip round by the back, and I discovered that a favourite device was to feign deafness, and so to disobey while pretending to misunderstand. At first I could hardly move round to one side of the house before a beggar came in at the other ; and I have more than once intercepted them in trying to enter the doorways. They tried all imaginable devices to melt our hearts, to worry us by perseverance, or to terrify by menacing aspect, until they seemed to make up their minds that we were acquainted with their wiles, and so ceased to trouble us any longer.



ROUGHIE CLAIMED BY A GENTLEMAN.

Under these circumstances, the services of a good watchful dog would have been invaluable, and I rather congratulated myself on Roughie's presence. I never made a greater mistake in my life. Roughie was quite charmed with the beggars, and positively welcomed them as he saw them coming. Instead of barking and snarling, as he ought to have done, and so calling our attention, he only rolled over on his back, and invited the intruder to a game of play. He really seemed to have no powers of discrimination, and was ready to play with anyone who happened to approach. Man, woman, or child was equally welcome, and he seemed as glad to see the most repulsive tramp as myself or any other of the household.

After he had been with me for a few days, I took him out for a walk. Except that he insisted on lagging behind, he behaved very well until he had gone about a mile, when I suddenly missed him. I called and whistled, but without avail, and then went back to look for him. Suddenly I caught sight of something tawny flourishing about behind some tufts of tall grass, and, on approaching nearer, saw Master Roughie in a very ecstasy of delight, rolling over and over, jumping round in the air, and playing all kinds of antics.

He paid no attention to my calls until I ran up to him with uplifted stick, when he uttered a sharp yelp of terror, and dashed off as fast as his short legs could carry him. However, I just succeeded in

reaching him with the tip of the stick, much to his discomfiture ; for he sat down on his tail, and howled pitifully, as soon as he thought himself at a safe distance.

By this time I was aware of a most horrible odour proceeding from the part of my stick which had struck the dog's back, and on searching the spot where I had roused him, I found the decomposing carcase of a young lamb, upon which the animal had been rolling himself. What to do with the dog I did not know, for he was so frightened at the stick that he dared not approach without encouragement, and I knew that if he were encouraged he would be mightily pleased, and jump on me. At last I contrived to get a long string round his neck, and so pulled him along to a shop, where a young lad was glad to wash him for a trifling reward. He consumed fully half a pound of soap in the operation, for the dog was no sooner dry than he had to be washed again, the odour of decomposing sheep being inexpressibly abominable. However, the job was completed at last, and Roughie was brought home quite cheerful and beautifully clean. Of course the lad fell in love with him, and was very anxious that I should give him the dog.

I took him out for several walks, and then discovered that he had the strangest propensity for straying. He never would be companionable as a dog ought to be, and if I took my eyes off him for a minute he was no more to be seen until some time

after my return home, when Mr. Roughie would turn up casually, and whisk about the house with his usual cheerfulness. He had a most comical way with him whenever he chose to traverse the house, his feet pattering with astonishing rapidity, and his feathery tail whisking about as if moved by a multiplying wheel.

That tail of his quite ruined the breakfast-room paper, for Roughie had a habit of sitting in the mud until his tail was wet, and then running over the house and switching that muddy member against the walls, so that they were streaked as if with dashes of a painter's brush ; not to mention printing off accurate impressions of his feet on the stair-carpets. And he was so absurdly brisk and cheerful about his delinquencies, so perfectly unconscious of having done anything wrong, that no one could help laughing at him ; and even his mistress could not find fault with him in his presence.

One day Roughie must needs accompany me into the study, and laid himself down very properly by the door. After a while I thought I perceived a sound like a distant lion's roar, but could not conceive its source, for although it was moderately loud and very constant, it seemed to gain no strength when I leaned out of window, but rather to lose its former volume.

Presently the growls waxed louder and more threatening, and Roughie began to prick up his ears.

Suddenly a sharp *fuff* from under the table betrayed the presence of Pret, who thought himself deeply aggrieved because a dog was brought into the same room with him. I made peace as well as I could, but Pret refused to be pacified, and his tail grew as large as a bottle brush.

As to Roughie, *he* was quite content, and would have been very friendly with Pret if the cat would have allowed it. Pret never was reconciled to Roughie, and used to *fuff* angrily whenever he found the dog in the house.

We now come to the last few scenes of my short acquaintance with this absurd dog.

One morning I had escorted the ladies of the family to a pretty piece of common land, at a little distance from the house, and took the dog with me, so that I could have him under my eye and see that he did not run away.

After he had been whisking about in his usual cheerful fashion for a little time, he tried to escape, after his custom ; but I contrived to intercept him, and threatened him with the stick. This menace frightened Roughie so dreadfully, that he at once dived under his mistress's dress as she was sitting on a camp-stool, and declined to emerge from his post of safety. At last she was obliged to get up, in order to dislodge the dog, but without the least effect ; for wherever she moved, Roughie moved with her, and could not be induced to show himself. At last I

caught a glimpse of his tail, which he had forgotten for the moment to tuck under his legs, made a smart dive at it, caught it, and hauled him out ignominiously.

No sooner did he find himself at liberty than he ran off to a hedge, and precipitated himself through a gap into the kitchen garden of a neighbouring cottage. I ran to the spot, but could see nothing of him, and to all my calls and whistles he paid no regard. I thought therefore that he had run home as usual, and searched no longer. When we returned, there were no signs of the dog, and on the following morning he was still absent. He had once before stayed away for a whole night, so I did not trouble myself about him.

Day after day passed, and no Roughie. So I made up my mind that he must have been stolen by a company of gipsies that were encamping in the neighbourhood, and on the whole was not very sorry for the loss, as the dog was utterly useless for the purpose which he ought to have served, and chiefly distinguished himself by doing exactly the very things that he ought not to have done.

Somewhere about a week or ten days after I missed Roughie, I came upon him quite unexpectedly.

We were returning from a walk, and happened to pass by a garden gate, at which stood a gentleman smoking a cigar, and having a dog between his feet. We all recognised Roughie, and, as we passed, he

looked at me in a very deprecatory manner. In order to make sure of the dog, and to feel certain that we were not deceived by another silken, tawny, black-eared Skye terrier, I swished my stick through the air with the same movement that had frightened him so much on a former occasion. Though we were at a considerable distance from the dog, down he dropped as if he had been shot, and would have crept up to me had I not walked away.

I did not choose to claim him, thinking that as he declined to stay with me I should decline to keep him ; accordingly we proceeded on our walk, leaving the dog with his self-chosen master. The house into which he had thus intruded himself is not more than a few hundred yards from my own, and none of the gardens in this neighbourhood are walled, so that there were no impediments to prevent the dog from returning home, if he had been so minded.

Rather more than three weeks had passed away after this adventure, and we had almost forgotten the very fact of Roughie's existence. I had used his chain to hang the parrot's cage from the branch of a chestnut tree, had given away his beautiful red collar, and converted his kennel into a room for Pret. One morning, as I looked out of the study window, I heard a sharp whine—and lo, there was Roughie, sitting on his tail, with head on one side, his tongue lolling out of his mouth, gasping with eagerness, and beseeching admission.

At first I would have nothing to do with him, and told him to go back to the place whence he came. However, he would not pay the least attention to my orders, and though I put him outside my gate until I was tired, he persevered in coming back again ; thus displaying his usual perversity of disposition. There was no help for it, back he would come, and here he insisted on staying.

Next morning, while puzzled as to his destination, and having made up my mind that I would not pay the dog-tax for such an uncontrollable being, the boy who had washed him came to the door on an errand. So I sent for the boy, and told him, to his great delight, that if he would be a kind master to Roughie, he might take the dog and keep him. Accordingly, off went Roughie with his new owner, perfectly happy and contented, according to his wont under all circumstances.

For some days, I saw the dog trotting merrily after his new master, and hoped that the lad might be more congenial to his feelings than myself. Yet he looked so handsome as he went pattering along, with his long tawny hair and black ears, that I half repented myself of my gift, and could not occasionally restrain a wish to have the bonnie dog back again. Still, in calmer moments, when the animal was out of my sight, I could but wonder how long he would stay with his young master, and fancied that I had not yet heard the end of him.

My previsions were speedily fulfilled. In about a week after he had been taken away, I was told that the boy wanted to see me. He was in dire distress about the dog, who, indeed, seemed to have the faculty of worrying everyone who owned him, and being very engaging to everyone who did not. The fact was, that the boy was fearful lest Roughie should be taken from him by legal means.

It seemed that on the preceding day he had met a gentleman who claimed Roughie as his property, and wanted to take him on the spot. The boy stoutly refused to part with the dog, stating that it had been given to him by me. The gentleman asserted that Roughie was not my dog, and that I had no right to give him, supporting his views by saying that Roughie had strayed into his house, that he had advertised the dog, and, having received no answer, had a legal right to the animal. He then called the dog by the name which he had given him, and the boy commanded him, by the name of Roughie, not to stir. Roughie preferred to obey the latter mandate, whereupon the other claimant went off, threatening to summon the boy for unlawful detention of a dog.

In fine, the whole scene must have been ludicrous in the extreme, especially when the dog's comical aspect of giving sidelong looks, and total inability to make up his mind, was taken into consideration. I think that to a bystander the scene must have

appeared as if it had been transferred bodily from the narrow stage of Punch, where the long-nosed hero and the rightful owner contend for the possession of Toby.

The poor boy was in great perturbation of mind, and was very anxious that I should call on the claimant and explain matters. This, however, I declined to do, but promised that if the possession of the dog were again called in question I would write a note, stating the grounds of my right to him and to give him away. A week passed without hearing anything more of the dog, when I happened to meet the boy, and asked him how the affair went on. His face instantly fell, and I heard, much to my amusement, that Roughie had himself cut the Gordian knot by running away again. He had then been missing for two days, and I was obliged to tell the boy, to his great sorrow, that there was not the least likelihood that he would ever see the dog again.

I certainly never did know such a case before. The animal seemed totally deficient in two great characteristics of the canine race, namely, attachment to its master, and the capability of individualising him. Anyone was welcome to be his patron, provided always that the contract could be dissolved at his own will and pleasure :—

For this is a kind of engagement, you see,
Which is binding on you, but not binding on me.

Nothing, indeed, was binding on him, unless in

the strictest sense of the word, when he was bound to his house through the medium of a collar and iron chain—rope being too easily sawn asunder with his teeth, or chafed apart by friction against a stone or the side of his kennel. No amount of kindness had the least effect upon this strange dog, who might almost have been thought an idiot, were he not so remarkably thoughtful of his own comforts. He did not know the meaning of obedience, and if you told him to do one thing, he quietly went and did something else.

Roughie was the first dog that has ever beaten me, and this by sheer vacuity and softness. I do not care how savage a dog may be, or how bad may be its temper, for there are means of management in either case, and the fiercest dog that ever barked and bit can be rendered perfectly tame and amenable by judicious treatment. But with such a dog as this nothing is to be done, and I really think that Toomer himself, who trained a sow to act as a pointer, would have made nothing of him. If he had only possessed the spirit to snarl or show his teeth, I should have had some hopes of him; but when a dog disobeys, gets punished, and immediately disobeys again in precisely the same manner, the case seems to be rather hopeless.

He was a dog that never could be made to feel ashamed of himself, to have the least idea that he had been doing wrong, or that he was not perfectly

welcome in any place, at any time, and under any circumstances. Some dogs are so sensitive to shame that a single word of reproach renders them miserable for days together, and they can neither eat nor sleep until they have obtained pardon. But as to Roughie, he had no more notion of feeling ashamed of himself for any act whatever than would an Andaman islander if reproved for neglecting to wear gloves, or eating without a silver fork and clean table-napkin. With him, the first law was his own amusement, and he never could be made to understand that, in seeking his own gratification in any way whatever, he could have done wrong.

Before taking final leave of this queer dog, I may mention that tidings of him arrived about a week after his last escapade. He was seen walking through the streets of Erith, and I suppose, by this time, has taken on trial and run away from three or four masters. In about a year, I shall expect to see him again, sitting in the rain, and wanting me to let him in.



B

APOLLO.

MORE ABOUT DOGS.



CHAPTER I.

The Results of Roughie's Conduct—A Patriotic Letter—Knowledge of Dog Character—First Appearance of 'Bosco'—Natural Timidity, and its Cure—Transfer of Affection—The Morning Run—Fear of Water, and its Cure—'Apollo'—His Exploit when a Puppy—Popular Ideas of the Bull-dog—Why he was called 'Apollo'—His Love for a Child—Gentleness of Disposition—His Ideas of Obedience—Apollo and the Tramps—A Mistaken Guest—His Prowess as a Water-dog—Apollo and the Retriever—His Favourite Game—Corporal Punishment not needed—The Hon. Grantley Berkeley's Experiences with High-bred Dogs.

IN the first edition of this book the title of the preceding chapter was, 'My Last Dog;' but as, at the

present date, Roughie was not my last dog, I have headed the chapter with the dog's name.

As we advance in life, the more do we recognise the value of trifles, and realise their effect upon our lives. The publication of this short memoir of an unsatisfactory dog, not only procured for me another dog, which, except in purity of breed, was the very reverse of Roughie, but led to a friendship of nearly twenty years' standing, and only broken within the last few months by death.

Almost immediately after the publication of 'Glimpses into Petland,' I received a letter from a Scotch lady, whose patriotic feelings were deeply wounded at such behaviour by a Scotch dog. She said that either he could not have been of pure breed, or that he had been transferred from one master to another, and had in consequence become selfish, and lost every vestige of the instinctive fealty towards man which is the leading characteristic of the dog. She suggested, also, that the apparent fatuity of the animal was nothing more than a mask assumed for the purpose of deceiving his temporary master and enabling him to do precisely as he liked.

Her knowledge of dog—at all events of Scotch dog—nature was more extensive than my own, and she was perfectly right in her suggestion. Roughie was a thorough-bred dog; but I learned that before he came to me he had passed through the hands of at least four owners, and probably several others, a kind of life which would demoralise any dog.

The letter ended by asking my acceptance of a thorough-bred Skye terrier, which I should have as a puppy, and of which I should be the first owner. Of course, I accepted the kindly offer with many thanks, and some months afterwards I received a letter saying that the dog would be in London at a certain hour.

On going to the indicated address, I found two ladies, namely, my correspondent and her sister, who had taken the trouble of going round by Glasgow, where the dog was bred, and conveying it themselves, lest it should come to harm on the way. The dog was given to me nicely packed in a basket, and I took it home at once.

When the basket was opened, there appeared within it a bundle of black and grey hair, which, when placed on the floor, sidled off without apparent means of locomotion. This was the dog, which was about as terrified an animal as can be imagined. He was then about three months old, and had never been out of the yard in which he was born, and had hardly seen a human being except his owner's family.

So, first to be put into a basket by people whom he did not know, then taken in a jolting cab, then passing twelve hours by railway where strange objects called trees incessantly rushed past him, was trouble enough. But then came another cab, and then a room with carpet, chairs, and tables. Next day another cab, then more railway, then another cab, and then

another room full of strangers. It was enough to upset the mind even of a human being under similar circumstances, and it was no wonder that the terrified little animal crept for refuge into the first dark spot that he could find.

However, in a day or two he had quite shaken off his terror, and was as lively and affectionate a dog as could be wanted.

Indeed, on the second day after his arrival, he and my eldest son, then a very little child, were seen sitting together under the table, the child having a gingerbread cake in each hand, and sharing them with the dog in alternate bites. He had been provisionally named 'Bosco,' as a sort of play upon my name, and I thought that he might as well retain the title.

He was very fond of me, but I did not see as much of him as I wished, because as years passed on he gave most of his affections to the children. Moreover, he very much disapproved of one habit in which I indulged. The house being out in the country, I used to start every morning at seven, no matter what the season or weather might be, and take a three miles' run without stopping or even walking. I then had another dog, a bull-dog, called Apollo, and he and Bosco used to accompany me in the morning run.

After a while, however, Bosco made up his mind that this long run without a check did not suit him. It was all that he could do, with his short legs, and laden with such a mass of long hair, to keep up with

his master over so hilly and uneven a road, and he had no leisure on the way. What he liked was to go out with the children and nurses ; then he could do as he chose. He could linger a little behind, or run on in front, gossip with other dogs on the way, inspect leisurely anything which aroused his curiosity, and come up every now and then and talk to the children.

So, after a while, he used to accompany me, for courtesy's sake, as far as the beginning of the first long hill, and then slip home again. He had found out, by some doggish process of reasoning, that the three miles had to be covered within a certain time, and that I would not either stop or go back for him. So he left Apollo, with his longer legs and short smooth coat, to the duty of accompanying me throughout these unaccountable expeditions. In the afternoon, or whenever I wore my usual dress, he was very happy to accompany me, knowing that I did not take a long run unless clad in appropriate costume.

He had for a year or two the most unreasonable dread of water, and if in the course of a walk we came to one of the large ponds which abound in the neighbourhood, he always kept himself at a respectful distance from the water's edge.

I understood dog nature too well to throw him into the pond, or even to urge him to enter the water. After a time, however, I saw him jump into a pond,

swim about merrily, and enjoy his bath amazingly. He had learned from a better teacher than myself. Apollo was a magnificent water-dog, and in some mysterious way had induced his companion to become a swimmer. This was the more remarkable because Bosco was not only the elder of the two dogs, but had been in the house some months before his companion came to us.

Now I have a few words to say about Apollo himself.

I had known his mother, 'Rose,' for some two years, not intimately, but as acquaintances who always spoke when we met. She was rather small for a bull-dog, and of a uniform fawn colour.

One day she presented her master with a litter of puppies, their father being a bull-dog of pure breed, like the mother. All the puppies except one were given away, and that one, the subject of this short memoir, was intended for a neighbour.

When the puppy was offered to the intended owner, he found that the mother and son were so attached to each other that he asked for the temporary loan of 'Rose.' He took them to his home, and, when evening came, locked them up in an outhouse. By ill-luck there was in the outhouse a double perambulator, nearly new. Next morning there was nothing left of the perambulator except the iron-work. On learning the results of the night's amusement, the lady of the house thought that a dog which would tear

a perambulator to tatters would act in the same way towards the children who were to have been put into it.

Thereupon the puppy was offered to me. Being at that time possessed with the popular prejudices against the bull-dog, and thinking that a thorough-bred bull-dog must be a dull, morose, surly animal, unfit to be a companion, and good for nothing but fighting, I rather hesitated about accepting him. However, I thought that perhaps the bad character of the bull-dog might be attributable, not to the dog, but to its education, and determined to try the experiment.

So I took the dog, and as I lived at Belvedere, in Kent, I thought that the name of Apollo would be appropriate, on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle. A neighbour of mine, who had seen the fragments of the perambulator, entreated me not to have the animal in the house, as it would be sure to eat the children. However, I took him, and, since the death of Rory, I never met with a more delightful dog.

As he grew up, though he was singularly handsome to a fancier's eye, the general public held precisely the opposite opinion. After the manner of his kind, when we went out for a walk, he always kept close behind me, with his nose at my heels. And every one who was about to meet us invariably crossed to the other side of the road.

It was quite a needless precaution, for a gentler or sweeter-tempered animal could not be found. So far from eating up the children, he simply worshipped

them. My eldest son, then just able to toddle, was always escaping from his nurse and crawling into Apollo's kennel. When he did so the dog was overjoyed. The child used to occupy the back of the kennel, and Apollo used to sit between him and the door, as if to act as guard.

Whenever the nurse missed the child, she went to the kennel, and was nearly certain to find him there. Her dealings with Apollo amused me greatly.

When she first came, she was so afraid of him that she would scarcely venture into the garden where his kennel was placed. But, after she had been with us for a week, she would go up to the kennel and look in it for the child. If he were there, she would pull Apollo out by the ears (which of course I did not allow to be cut) and regain possession of her charge.

The reader may ask why she did not order him to come out. The fact was, that Apollo had assumed as an axiom that women were not meant to be obeyed by bull-dogs, and he consistently adhered to this principle. He would not commit any act of overt disobedience, but simply ignored the command. As in the present instance, though he would not have paid any heed to the young woman if she had ordered him to come out of the kennel, he offered no resistance when she dragged him out. He had asserted his principle, and was satisfied.

On account of the thickness of his neck, he was always able to take off his collar, and would some-

times leave collar and chain behind, and stray into the road. At that time the wisdom of the local magistrates had forbidden dogs to appear in public except accompanied by their masters.

I have more than once seen the same girl run into the road after him, drag him back by his ears, put on his collar, give him a sound cuff or two, and bundle him into his kennel. He knew that he had done wrong, and so never attempted to run away from the girl; nor did he resist, allowing himself passively to be dragged to his kennel. Practically, collar and chain were simple emblems that he was to stay at home, for, unless the collar were tightened until the dog was nearly strangled, he could always scrape it off with his fore-paws.

His appearance was of the greatest benefit to us. The house was on the high road connecting London, Woolwich, Chatham, and Dover, and the number of professional tramps that used to annoy us daily was almost incredible. But as soon as Apollo showed himself, the tramp thought that he had better betake himself to the high road again.

Some of my readers may not be aware that tramping is a regular profession. Tramps have their circuits, their houses of call, and their sign-language, by which a straw stuck into a bank, a mud splash on a wall, a chalk streak on a tree-trunk, or a scratch on the ground, made apparently at random by a stick, conveys information to the initiated, and to no others.

They have pass-words which are altered every three months, and the only way to procure the new pass-word is, first to give the discontinued word, and then pay the three months' subscription in advance. Now one of these marks signifies that a ferocious dog is kept on the premises, and, in consequence, we were left comparatively undisturbed.

On one occasion his formidable aspect led to a rather absurd mistake.

A friend had walked from Wickham to see us, and had brought his two retriever dogs with him. When he arrived I happened to be out of the house; but on returning I saw the two dogs lying in front of my door.

Having known them at their own house, I went up the steps and spoke to them. They were polite, but they did not know that I was the master of the house, and would not allow me to come near enough to reach the bell or knocker. So I was obliged to go round by the back door.

We had been sitting and talking for some time, when my mother drew our attention to a man who was walking backwards in the road, nearly hidden from view by a row of trees, but evidently watching the house. Presently she said that she recognised him as her brother, and so he was. Of course I went out to him, and then learned the cause of his deambulations.

He had come from London to see us, but without

having given notice. When he came to the house, the two retrievers not only refused to allow him to approach, but were so menacing in their conduct that he dared not attempt to pass them. So, as I had done, he went round by the other way, but as he entered the back garden he confronted Apollo, of whose existence he was not aware. The very look of the dog was too much for him, and so he retreated to the road, intending to wait until the owner of the retrievers had taken his leave.

I have casually mentioned Apollo's excellence as a swimmer. Indeed, I doubt very much whether the best bred Newfoundland dog or water-spaniel could surpass him in aquatic prowess.

He had a way all his own of entering the water. He would first saunter up to the bank and look curiously at the water, as if he were not quite sure whether he had ever seen such a thing before. Then he would retire for some ten or twelve yards, and suddenly make a rush and a leap, as if he were shot from a cannon, tucking up his legs as he darted through the air, and ploughing a long channel in the water before he moved a limb.

When swimming, he seemed to alter his whole shape. His broad chest, with the ample lungs within it, sustained him nobly; his ordinarily thick neck seemed to have a power of elongating itself, and to be as flexible as that of a snake. He could therefore raise his head high out of the water, and scan

surrounding objects in a way that I never saw equalled by any other dog.

On one occasion he put this faculty to a valuable use.

One hot summer's day we had been for a long walk, in the course of which he had taken several baths, and had always rolled himself in the dust afterwards, so that he looked about as disreputable an object as could be imagined. We happened to pass by a large pond, partly covered with weeds. A gentleman was standing on the bank, and throwing a gold-headed Malacca cane into the water for his dog—a very handsome retriever—to fetch.

At last, the cane was thrown too far, the golden head acted like the heavy point of a spear or arrow, and when the cane reached the water, it shot under some weeds and did not reappear. The retriever failed to find it, and was sent back again, Apollo giving me a look that was quite intelligible to me.

Time after time did the retriever go in search of the stick, and then Apollo became very uneasy in his mind, looked wistfully at me, and gave a little whimper occasionally. However, I restrained him until the retriever and its master were going away, and then said that I thought my dog capable of finding the cane. The owner of the cane, not being in the best temper at the loss of his property, looked with infinite contempt at Apollo, muttered something under his breath, and turned away.

Then I just nodded my head, and Apollo hurled himself into the water after his usual fashion. Rearing his head as high as possible, he took his bearings, and swam straight for the spot where the cane had sunk. Here he paused for a moment, took another comprehensive look around him, and dived. Presently he reappeared, bearing the cane in his mouth, and so brought it ashore.

There was then a rather ludicrous episode. The gentleman praised Apollo very highly, and then went to resume his property. But this was not at all in accordance with the ideas of Apollo, who had not the slightest intention of giving up the cane to any one except myself. Knowing what would happen, I had walked forwards just as Apollo came to the bank, wishing to take a little mild revenge for the contempt shown to my favourite. The result was that the owner of the cane was obliged to appeal to me before he could regain it.

It would, indeed, have been impossible for any one to have taken that cane from Apollo, for he had to the full the proverbial tenacity of gripe which belongs to the bull-dog. Then, he was far more active than is usually the case with bull-dogs. I used to keep him in constant exercise, and to practise him in leaping until he could spring to a marvellous height.

One of his favourite games was this. We went out on the lawn, he standing at one end, and I about the middle. Then I held at arm's length a

short piece of thick rope. At a given signal, Apollo sprang forward, leaped into the air, and caught the rope in his jaws. The force of his impetus always spun me round, and his delight was to be swung round and round while holding the rope. Then, at the last swing, I used to throw him over my shoulder by the rope, and carry him about. During this process, he always tucked up his legs as close to his body as possible.

At first, I only held the rope parallel with my shoulder, but I gradually increased the height of the leap until at last he became as active as a greyhound, and could catch the rope when held as high as my arm would reach. He was madly fond of this game, and sometimes I used to tease him by putting him on the chain and pretending to play the game with Bosco, who was utterly incapable of going through such a performance. Apollo dared not take off the collar, and would dance frantically about, and howl with anguish.

My friend who prognosticated that Apollo would eat the children occasionally witnessed the game. He was always himself afraid of the dog, and kept himself at a safe distance ; but the performance had a fascination for him which he could not resist.

Apollo was not a large dog, but the amount of muscular power that was packed into his body was wonderful. He was quite conscious of his strength, and could afford to take insults quietly.



APOLLO WILL NOT PART WITH THE CANE

This, I am told, is one of the characteristics of the thorough-bred animal, a mixture of the terrier being apt to produce a quarrelsome and aggressive animal. Whereas Apollo would allow all kinds of liberties on the part of most dogs, he drew his line of forbearance, however, at bull-dogs, mastiffs, bloodhounds, and Newfoundland dogs; but even these animals were never attacked by him unless they committed an actual assault—and when they did so, I never knew one who had not to run round the next corner as fast as he could.

I had him for some years, and never knew a dog more gentle and obedient. I never once used the whip, and never knew him to disobey. Indeed, the mere notion that I was displeased with him was so terrible a punishment that stripes, however severe, would have been nothing in comparison. The late Hon. Grantley F. Berkeley wrote to me some years ago of his pet dogs, in which he gives a similar account of their sensitiveness to displeasure.



MUSICUS AND MUSICA WAITING FOR THE SPORTSMEN.

CHAPTER II.

Power of Finding their Way—From Inverness to Dunse—From St. Petersburg to Paris—‘Calliach’s’ Journey—From Holywell in Wales to Manchester—From Calcutta to Inverkeithing—Conversation among Dogs—The Scotch Collie, its Many Virtues and its One Vice—The Collie, Shepherd, and Sheep—Cunning of Sheep-worrying Dogs—The Farmer’s Dog, its Detection and Fate—‘Help’ and his Master—Evil Communications—Legitimate and Illegal Sport—Knowledge of Human Language—A Journey to Haddington—‘Mesty’ and his Chain—‘Bo’sun’ and his own Pets—Outwitting his Mistress—The ‘Great Gulf’ between Man and Beast, and its Bridge—Ourselves and the Lower Races of Mankind—Individuality among Dogs—‘Honest Jack’ and ‘Gentleman Conny’—‘Bijou’ and the Canary.

THE last chapter deals only with the life of two dogs belonging to myself. In the present chapter I shall treat of the various qualities, whether good or bad, possessed by various dogs, and shall illustrate them by narratives given as far as possible in the words of my correspondents.

I may also mention that, although the writers of these letters do not desire their names to be published. I retain the original documents for the purpose of verification, should such a process be necessary.

One curious faculty which belongs to several animals is developed to the highest degree in the dog. I allude to their power of finding their way to their home or to their masters, and in many cases over country which they have never traversed. Here is one example where the dog misused his faculties, and in this instance I am authorised to give the names in full.

‘On the farm of Blackrigg, on the estate of Langton, near Dunse, there lived a man named James Wright, who had been a shepherd in his younger days, but latterly worked by the job.

‘Among other work he was engaged to go to Inverness to bring back a large drove of black-faced Highland sheep. Accordingly he started by train from Dunse to Edinburgh, accompanied by his dog. Thence he went to Glasgow by the canal, then changed into the steamboat that ran down the Clyde to Oban. From Oban he went to Inverness by the Crinan and Caledonian canals.

‘The sheep were to be brought as much as possible by land ; and so the man, his dog, and the sheep, all started on the homeward journey. In a short time, however, the dog disappeared ; and, on enquiry being made, it was found that the dog had been seen swimming down the canal.

‘The man Wright was put to great inconvenience, as he was obliged to do the dog’s duty himself. When he arrived at Blackrigg, he found the dog waiting to receive him, having been at home for some time.’

It was a very clever feat for the dog, but the animal received a severe and deserved punishment for deserting his duty. As his wife told my informant, ‘he was awfu’ angry wi’ the dowg.’

Here is a still more remarkable example :—

‘When, in 1866, my niece, Miss Janet S. H——g, was at the boarding school of Miss H——, Avenue de Neuilly, she had lessons in painting from M. H——n. At the beginning of the session he told my niece a few anecdotes about his little Scotch terrier called “Médore.”

‘He was obliged to leave Paris for a time, and, not being able to take the dog with him, left it in charge of a friend. By some curious chance the friend was called suddenly to St. Petersburg, and, not knowing what to do with the little creature, took it with him. Both man and dog reached St. Petersburg safely ; but shortly after their arrival the dog was lost, and, though every effort was made to recover it, M. H——n’s friend was obliged to write and say that Médore was hopelessly lost.

‘About the end of May, some months after the letter had been received, M. H——n came as usual to give his lesson. He seemed in great grief, and in

broken accents asked to be excused from giving the lesson, as he was quite incapable of it. "My poor little dog! my poor little dog!" was all that he could say for some time. At last, being encouraged by his pupil's sympathy, he told her the whole story.

'For some time a miserable, half-starved dog, covered with scars and bruises, had persisted in scraping at his door; and the servant, being annoyed by its persistence, kicked the dog downstairs repeatedly. But, as soon as it recovered from its fall, it returned to the door, and renewed the scratching.

'Whenever M. H——n entered or left the house the dog kept jumping upon him and trying in every way to attract his attention. At last, an idea flashed across his mind. Could this disreputable-looking animal be by any possible chance the dog which had been lost at St. Petersburg? He fixed his eyes upon it, and said, "Médore." The dog gave a piercing cry and fell at his feet. He picked it up, carried it into the house, and laid it gently on the sofa. But Médore was dead.'

I might fill a book with similar narratives, and so will only add one or two more instances, in which there is some peculiar point of interest.

'In the year 1846, I went from Argyllshire to live at Joppa, which is beyond Portobello, and about five miles westward of Edinburgh, where my father resided, together with one of my brothers who had been on a visit to me.

‘I had at this time a Scotch terrier called Calliach, of which my brother had made a pet. This dog had never been out of the Highlands until sent to me. She arrived at Edinburgh late on Saturday night, and was taken to my father’s at the extreme west end of Edinburgh, where she remained until the following Monday.

‘Then I took her *inside* a cab to the Waverley station, and put her under the seat of the railway carriage which took us to Joppa. In the evening my servant took the dog with him to Portobello, when she disappeared.

‘Next morning, at six o’clock, when the front door of my father’s house was opened, the dog rushed upstairs and jumped into my father’s bed. Remember, I had taken her *inside* the cab, and under the seat of the railway carriage. After finding her way to Edinburgh, she had to traverse the entire length of the city from east to west.’

Two other instances I shall not give in full. A medical friend of mine, when practising in Manchester, was attending a workman in the firm of Messrs. Sharp, Boors & Co. As soon as the man was able to travel, he went to Holywell in Wales, where his mother lived. When he returned to his business his mother gave him a dog, with which he set off homewards, leading the animal by a string. First he went by road to Bagill, and then took boat for Chester. He walked through Chester and went by rail to Birkenhead. Then he walked to the pier, and went

by boat to Liverpool, through which he had to walk in order to reach the Lime Street station.

After arriving at Manchester he had to walk a mile and a half, reaching his home on Wednesday. He kept the dog tied up until Sunday, when he loosed it. The dog contrived to slip away, and on the following Wednesday the man received a letter from his mother to say that the dog had returned, having made this complicated journey alone in forty-eight hours.

The next account is from a gentleman who has favoured me with much valuable information about animal life, more especially that of the dog.

A collie was sent from Inverkeithing, on the Firth of Forth, to Calcutta. The sender received a letter acknowledging the receipt of the dog, but adding the information 'that the animal had run away and was lost.' A few weeks afterwards he was astonished at the arrival of the collie, who was mad with joy at finding his master.

On inquiry it was found that he had taken ship at Calcutta for Dundee, and thence had come to Inverkeithing by a collier.

Such a performance as this, like that of the cat which crossed Scotland (see p. 94), is quite inexplicable in our present state of knowledge. I can only suggest that these animals may be gifted with some faculty which man does not possess because he does not want it.

It is just possible that they may be able to gain information from others of their own kind, for that they can converse in a manner perfectly intelligible to themselves is well known to everyone who has been accustomed to watch their habits. The readers may themselves remember the case of Brownie and his mother, and there are many other instances on record.

In Scotland, this faculty of conversation is apt to lead to very bad results.

There is no dog like the Scotch collie for a sheep guardian. He will watch over them as if they were his own offspring. He knows every sheep in the flock, and can separate them from those of other flocks should they have strayed. Should they be buried in the snowdrifts he will discover them by his sense of smell, and help his master in extricating them.

During that terrible winter of 1880, I saw a shepherd, his collie, and some sheep which they had rescued.

The white outlines of the mountainous country were not only obscured, but totally altered, by the fantastic snowdrifts, which assumed such unexpected forms that an apparently solid bank might be only a thin bridge which spanned a crevice, a fall into which was certain death.

Nor was this all the danger. It might be thought that the shepherd need only retrace the tracks which he and his dog had made. But those tracks did not exist, for the fierce wind circled round and round,

wherever its current was arrested by any obstacle, caught up the snow in a cloud of white powder, and finally let it settle into the most extraordinary and all but incredible series of pinnacles, trenches, banks, and walls, not one of which was in the least accordance with the natural customs of the country.

So, after having acted as a rescuer, the collie was taking the part of guide, and was tracing out the slight sheep-path which lay beneath the snow, and which was so deeply buried that no human eye could have discovered it.

A more curious sight I never witnessed. There was the steep side of the mountain, all covered with snow, shaped into the fantastic devices which have already been mentioned. Nearly half way up it were the dog, the sheep, and the shepherd, all walking in Indian file, and all looking equally black against the white snow.

I mention the dog first, because he was the only one who seemed to have any spirit in him. The sheep crawled slowly and feebly along, the shepherd was ploughing his way through the snow, bending forwards against the wind, his plaid wrapped tightly round him, and his bonnet pulled over his eyes. But the dog was full of life and spirit, every now and then almost disappearing in the deep snow and then emerging as lively as ever.

Yet these very dogs are terribly liable to betray their wolfish origin and become sheep-killers. I

believe that such dogs never injure the sheep as long as they are in charge of the flock, but as soon as they are off duty and can escape notice they will destroy the very sheep which they had previously guarded.

The cunning of a confirmed sheep-killer is almost incredible. From many authenticated accounts of such dogs I select the following :—

‘A dog belonging to the B——s, which was a great favourite of theirs and regarded as of thoroughly irreproachable training, was charged by some of their neighbours with worrying sheep at night. The family rebutted this charge, on the ground that the dog was fastened into their kitchen at night, and was never let out until the servants came down in the morning.

‘The farmers, however, persisted that they knew the dog well, and had seen him going from the sheep-fold, though he had managed to escape them. When this was urged so strongly as to make it imperative on the B——s to take some further steps, one of the daughters volunteered to sleep in the kitchen and watch the dog’s behaviour.

‘When they made up the young lady’s bed, the dog seemed very restless and strange, but by-and-by he settled down, and all was silent.

‘A little after midnight he got up, came to the bed, and sniffed about until he had satisfied himself that the lady was not awake. Then he leaped into the window seat, lifted the catch of the shutters, and

opened them. Then he undid the latch of the window, which he opened, and then disappeared.

‘After a long interval, he came back, closed and fastened the window and shutters, and finished by licking his own feet, and the marks which he had left by springing on the floor. To the terror of the seeming sleeper, he now came and closely scrutinised her ; but she kept still, and he at last crept off to his own bed.

‘As soon as she heard the servants stirring, the lady rose softly and slipped through the door. But the guilty dog had marked her. He sprang up and made a dash at her with most undisguised fury, for he saw that his secret was discovered and his character blasted by one whom he now regarded as a hateful spy.

‘Fortunately, she got the door fast shut in time, and at once alarmed the house. But the dog was now so furious that no one dared go into the kitchen, and at last a gun was brought, pointed through an aperture, and he was shot dead.’

I know of another case, where a dog named ‘Help’ used to slip off his collar at night, and worry sheep for some hours. When he came back, he used to wash his bloody nose and face in a brook, put on his collar again, and lie down to sleep as if he had never left his kennel.

His master saw him go through the whole process, and gave orders for his death. ‘Help,’ however,

like the previously mentioned dog, found out that he had been detected, and when the man came to lead him to his doom, the collar was empty, and he was never seen again.

When a dog is once detected in worrying sheep, he must die, and he seems to know it.

There appears to be no cure for this vice, and the most intellectual dogs are, when infected with it, the worst culprits, and are often the least suspected.

That 'evil communications corrupt good manners' is as true of mankind to-day as it was when Euripides first wrote the line, and when St. Paul quoted it four hundred and fifty years afterwards. But it is equally applicable to dogs, for if the vice of sheep-worrying should develop itself in a single dog, he is sure to infect all the neighbouring dogs with it, and to make them as bad as himself. No less than seven sheep-dogs have been seen acting in concert. They belonged to different masters, and must have arranged both place and time for their meeting.

I knew of a case where two shepherds—strangers to each other—met at Kirkcudbright, and each accompanied by his dog. One of the dogs had been for some time suspected of sheep-killing, but not caught in the act. This dog was observed to look at the other in a strange sort of way, and the two masters agreed to watch the animals. That very evening both dogs left their homes at the same hour, met, and went off on their wicked business.

Therefore death is the only remedy ; and a shepherd, however much he might love his dog, would condemn it without mercy if he once caught it going after the sheep.

Indefensible crime as it is from a social point of view, and one which must on public grounds be sternly repressed at any cost to private feelings, sheep-worrying is simply a return to the natural instinct for hunting, which, when subjected to training—in other words, to reason—is one of the most valuable traits in the character of the dog.

Although some dogs are unfortunately given to illegal sport rather than quench the spirit of hunting altogether, there are some which can indulge their sporting instinct without infringing upon their allegiance to man. Here, for example, are two instances of sport legitimately conducted by the dog.

‘While I was living in Brittany, I made the acquaintance of two dogs, a brother and sister, called respectively “Musicus” and “Musica.” They seemed to be a sort of mongrel breed, partly fox-hound and partly beagle.

‘Every Sunday morning they went together about a mile in one of the high roads, and there, after seating themselves on the top of a bank, they awaited the arrival of some party of sportsmen.

‘They were well acquainted with all the different parties belonging to the town, and if they did not like the first party, they would hide themselves until

it had passed by, and so on until there came a party of which they approved. Then they would offer their services, which were always eagerly accepted, as Musicus and Musica were known to be first-rate dogs. The contract was always ratified by means of a piece of bread, and then the dogs would work hard all day, and take their share of the provisions.

‘Sometimes they did not approve of any of the parties, and in that case went quietly home.’

‘I also know another pair of friends.

‘One, “Bertico,” was a large, rough, otter-hound, and the other, “Tom Pouce,” a dachshound. He was about ten inches in height and four feet in length, with a long, solemn face, and the bandiest set of legs that I ever saw.

‘They always hunted together after the following fashion. They would make their way to a furze cover, and Bertico would seat himself on a bank at the corner. Then Tom Pouce would hunt through the covert, and as soon as he drove out a rabbit, Bertico gave chase to it; while Tom Pouce took his friend’s place, and enjoyed the view of the run.

‘By the way, Bertico was my own dog, and shared with me a love for gooseberries, which he would gather and eat faster than I could. We used to take opposite sides of the same bush, and Bertico would resent with much growling any attempt on my part to trespass on his side of the bush.’

That dogs can also, to a certain degree, understand

human language is well known, and I here give three examples of this faculty.

‘About seven or eight miles from Haddington there lived a shepherd, locally called “Jock,” who had occasion to go to Haddington. As he did not wish to be accompanied by his collie dog, he shut it up in the “but-house” (*i.e.* out-house) among the coals and rubbish.



TOM POUCE ENJOYING THE VIEW OF THE RUN.

‘Some time after the man had gone, the guid-wife went to the but-house to bring in some coals and the dog, thus let loose, went quietly into the house and lay down on the hearth. Presently a man entered, and asked the woman where Jock was to be found, as he wished to see him. So she told him that her husband had gone to Haddington, but that he would not be long away.

‘After this conversation took place, the guid-wife

observed the dog get up and go out of the house, but thought no more about it.

‘Well, not long after Jock arrived in the town, while standing in the market-place, he was surprised when his dog jumped upon him, manifesting many tokens of delight at the meeting. Now, there are two ways of getting to Haddington from the farm. One is the public road, along which Jock had walked that day ; the other was a near cut over fields, and it was by this latter track that the dog went to Haddington, for he was met on his way by an acquaintance who knew him.’

As the dog went to Haddington by a different route to that which his master had taken, it is evident that he did not travel by scent, but had learned the whereabouts of his master from the conversation. He might not have understood the language grammatically, but he did at all events know the word ‘Haddington,’ and acted accordingly.

Even dogs of less celebrated origin than the collie are perfectly capable of understanding portions of human language. For example, there was a dog named ‘Mesty’ belonging to one of my friends, who was then in the army. The dog was never chained except when travelling. One day, his master had to go to London from Woolwich, where the regiment was quartered, and the servant went to fetch the chain. It could not be found anywhere in the house, and at last the man asked Mesty where his chain

was. The dog immediately went off to an outhouse, and reared himself against the wall under a shelf, on which was found the missing chain.

I knew this dog well, and have narrated some of his very eccentric life-history in my 'Man and Beast.'

Another illustration of the knowledge which animals can possess of human speech occurred to a friend of mine while living in Brittany.



BO'SUN AND THE RUSSIAN CAT.

She possessed a favourite mastiff, named 'Bo'sun,' who is mentioned in another part of this book.

He was a dog, like my Apollo, uniting the most truculent aspect with the gentlest disposition. He even had pets of his own, one of them being a lamb. He and the lamb would lie side by side under the kitchen table, a magpie perched on his head, and a little deformed chicken traversed his side, scratching

among his fur as if she were searching for food in the garden.

There was another pet of his, whom he did not at all want, but who insisted on his companionship. This was a large Russian cat, who thought that her proper place was between his fore-paws. Bo'sun was of a different opinion ; but this mattered nothing to the cat. She knew that he would not hurt her, and would not only insist upon her seat between his fore-paws, but even go still further, and, as her owner wrote to me, used to aggravate him in the most 'human' manner.

'She would mew into his face, and give him vicious pats and scratches, while he would lie trembling and shivering with the effort of restraining his desire to seize her and shake the life out of her. She was not an amiable cat, and I didn't sorrow much when the peasants killed and ate her.

'She was, however, a clever cat in her way. She had been brought up with three setter pups, and used to go out to exercise with them, obeying the whistle and crack of the groom's whip as well as they did.

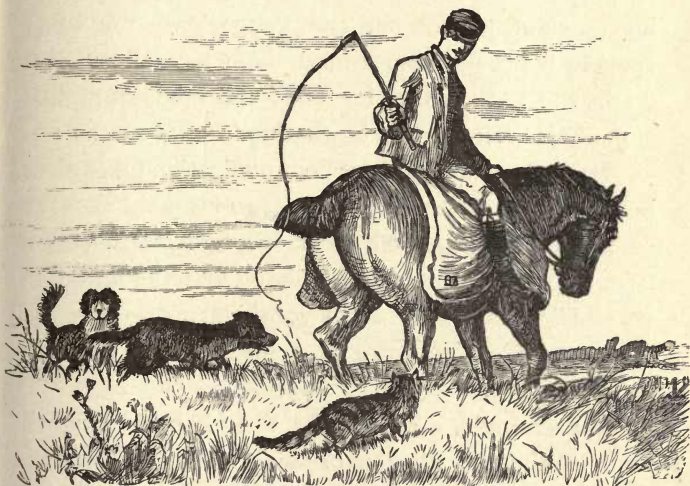
'This may explain her wish for the society of Bo'sun, to whom we will now return.

'He was very fond of accompanying the carriage, and one morning he was sitting at the horses' heads as usual.

'I was going into the house to fetch the whip, when my husband asked me whether I would take

the dog. I replied that I should not do so, as he would be in the way. When I came out of the house Bo'sun was not to be seen. Thinking that he had gone off to his favourite amusement of hunting after cats, I drove off.

' At the end of the avenue, where it joins the high road, there was Bo'sun, sitting in the middle of the



THE RUSSIAN CAT TAKING EXERCISE WITH THE DOGS.

road. As soon as he saw the carriage, he jumped over the hedge, and I could only see his eyes through it. He watched us until he saw which way we were going, jumped back into the road and followed us, keeping just out of whip-reach, and pretending to be deaf and blind, so that he could neither hear nor see

me. When we reached our destination, he trotted up gaily, and as soon as I got out, he got in, and sat on the driver's seat as if he were the groom.'

One of my correspondents gives a very happy summing up of this faculty.

'There is a great gulf fixed between us and the lower animals, and, when it is slightly bridged over, it is they who come to us, learn our language, and invent signs to suit our comprehension. We never cross to them, nor understand them as well as they do us, and to their true inner life and mode of mutual communication the key is wanting.'

Much the same mode of communication takes place between us and the inferior races of mankind. We cannot enter into their inner life, and do not, as a rule, learn their language. They cross the bridge to us, and learn enough of our vocabulary, grafted upon their own ideas, to serve as a medium of communication.

For example, we may take the 'Pigeon' English used in China. Pigeon, or 'pidgin' is, by the way, the Chinese pronunciation of 'business,' and is used as indiscriminately as the word 'fix' is employed in America.

So, when a Chinese servant announces exultingly, during a period of anxiety in the household, 'Velly good pigeon, Misse hab catchee one piecey cow chilo,' or that he 'hab catchee flowty dollar topside bulow,' he is understood to state that he has brought

good news, his mistress having presented her husband with a little girl ; or that he has found forty dollars on the top of a bureau.

Similarly in Australia a strangely composite language has been agreed upon by the two races, the words being mostly English, and the idiom Australian. Thus a black fellow will put his head into the room and say sententiously, ' Mine make a light one flying doe joey, mine pi him cobbong ; ' that being his mode of stating that he had seen a female kangaroo with a young one and knocked them on the head.

We can understand the ideas which they want to communicate to us ; but none of us can divine what passes in the mind of the inscrutable Chinaman, or what are the thoughts which occupy the brain of the Australian black fellow.

The following little history is interesting as showing the strong individuality which was exhibited by two dogs, who were not only of the same breed, but were constant companions.

'Miss D—— of F—— Hall, K——, N.B., is the happy possessor of two little terriers, respectively named "Jacky" and "Conny," but more familiarly known in the household as "Honest Jack" and "Gentleman Conny," not that the one is in the least coarse or vulgar in his ways, or that the other is anything of a thief. But it is frequently said of the former, "I like Jack, he seems an honest kind of dog ;" while of the latter it is asserted by his admirers that

he is more of a drawing-room dog than his companion.

‘Jacky’s hair is a beautiful bluish grey, dashed with silver, while Conny’s fur is wholly fawn-coloured.

‘Their dispositions and household ways are quite as diverse as their appearance. Jacky goes through his daily routine of eating and drinking in simple dog fashion. Far otherwise is it with Conny. When he is hungry he stamps his feet, eyes you with wrathful glances, and demands, in what he thinks to be a voice of thunder, the food which he chooses to imagine is being wrongfully withheld from him. Should he be thirsty when tea, of which he is very fond, is on the table, he waxes simply furious should his sign of licking his lips be misinterpreted and a piece of cake or bread be offered to him instead of a saucer of tea. Feet, eyes, and voice express a perfect whirlwind of indignation.

‘Then, when the dogs are taken for a walk on the public road, Jacky jogs along in a sort of ambling fashion peculiarly his own, and looks neither to the right or left.

‘Far different is it with Conny, who starts and pauses at every sound, now gazing up at the musical wires of the railway telegraph, now at the passing trains, and now at the various carts and horses—

with looks all wonder
At everything the heavens under.

Indeed, so numerous are the attractions presented

to his gaze on the Queen's highway, that to get him home is by no means an easy task, and not unfrequently it is necessary to carry him in baby fashion.

'With his attractive appearance and pretty engaging ways "Gentleman Conny" became a great



JACKY AND CONNY.

favourite with a lady visitor, and a satisfactory code of signals came to be established between them. On one occasion Miss C—— had been absent for some time, and on her return, not finding the dog, she asked, "Where is Conny?" At once "Bow!" came from the conservatory in which he had been locked

up. Master Conny had heard the inquiry, and had taken it on himself to answer it personally.' Here, by the way, is another proof that a dog can understand human language.

I will conclude these dog-stories with an anecdote of a little dog who lived at Clevedon.

'My wife had a pet dog named "Bijou," and also a pet canary. There was also in the house a cat for whom Bijou always evinced the greatest regard, never touching their common meal until she had first helped herself.

'When the canary was to be let out of the cage for exercise, the cat was first banished from the room, and Bijou ordered to lie under a chair, where he obediently remained, but testified his displeasure by growling. On one occasion the door was opened, and, of course, in walked pussy. Before anyone could move, Bijou dashed across the room, seized the cat, and held her down until the bird had been replaced in its cage. Thus, in the interest of his mistress, he defended the bird which he hated from the cat which he loved.

'Yet this dog usually showed so little sense that when the seat was removed from a chair which formed his usual post of observation, he would jump in it and tumble through it over and over again, learning nothing by experience.'



TERRIER AND CHAMELEON.

UNCONVENTIONAL PETS.

CHAPTER I.

MY CHAMELEON.

My first Acquaintance with the Chameleon—Merrick's Poem—Children's Books and their Illustrations—Popular Notions of Size—Colour of Chameleon—Mistaken Ideas on the Subject—My first Sight of a Real Chameleon—Visit to a Zoological Dépôt—A Bundle of Chameleons—My own Chameleon—Grasping Power of its Feet—Ascent of the Curtain, and Difficulty of Removal—Its Deliberate Movements—Its Cry—Its Roving Habits—Mode of Progression—Escape and Recapture—A Chameleon in Fetters—Mode of Spanning a Gap.

My first acquaintance with the chameleon was owing, as far as I can remember, to Merrick's well-known little poem, commencing—

Oft it has been my lot to mark
A proud, conceited, talking spark.

There was an engraving appended to the poem, which gave a tolerable idea of the reptile's general form, but impressed me with strange notions of its size. By comparing it with the other illustrations of the same dimensions which ornamented the volume, I took up a notion that a chameleon and a crocodile were nearly of a size, and should have almost refused to believe any one who had shown me one of the living creatures.

Now, this is one of the many instances where a little carelessness in illustrations has given children false ideas of comparative size which cannot be eradicated without great trouble, and, in the face of more matured experience, will repeatedly assert themselves for many years after they have been apparently banished.

In very many works printed for the benefit of children, and in which the illustrations are correct and really well executed, a similar fault is committed—namely, of figuring isolated objects without giving any means of conjecturing their size. We have, for example, the mouse represented on a larger scale than the elephant ; there are no means of comparing the dimensions of the eagle and the humming-bird ; and the bleak occupies the same space as the shark.

It is surprising what erroneous ideas are put into the mind by such illustrations. In showing friends over the British Museum, I always hear many expressions of astonishment at the new notions of size

which have to be learned ; and, as a general rule, the visitors seem disappointed that all the creatures are so much smaller than they had expected. It is true that, in the present instance, the error was of little importance, as a wrong idea of a chameleon's size can exert a very trifling influence on a human life. But it is really of consequence that an idea implanted in the mind of a child should be a true one, were it only to save the subsequent trouble of unlearning what has been impressed on the memory, and avoiding the confusion which is always the result of such a proceeding.

There is nothing easier than to give correct notions of size. The two great painters, Turner and Martin, could make a little drawing of an inch in length convey ideas of infinite space, simply by their method of arranging the objects represented ; while an indifferent artist, with a large canvas at his command, can only express uniform meanness and littleness.

The size of the engraving has nothing to do with the apparent dimensions of the object represented, for by judiciously contrasting objects with each other, their relative sizes are at once seen. If, for example, the artist who drew the chameleon had only inserted a familiar flower into his drawing, or merely represented the reptile in the act of approaching a fly, he would at once have shown that the chameleon was a little creature, and not a huge tree-haunting dragon,

from which even the Knight of Rhodes might be expected to run away.

At present, on looking through many illustrated children's books, I find that there is, in the generality of engravings, no mode of ascertaining whether the object is four feet or four inches in height, or what relation it bears to other objects.

It is rather remarkable, that in the little poem which I have just mentioned, the author should have contrived to hit upon two of the colours which the chameleon never assumes—namely, blue and white. For the former tint there are no grounds whatever, while the only white portion of the reptile is a narrow ridge that runs along the centre of the under side of the body from the chin to the tail. So, what with the portrait and what with the poem, I had rather an odd notion of a chameleon.

My next acquaintance with the creature was at the Zoological Gardens, where, to my great delight, not unmixed with nervousness at the thought of encountering such a huge reptile, I was told I should see a real live chameleon. Of course I expected to see an animal at least as large as myself, and supposed that it would be coloured like a rainbow, with crimson and azure and gold and white, and was by no means prepared for a little brown beast sticking on the end of a branch. I was rather unfortunate that day, for the chameleon never moved, and remained of a sober brown during my visit. However,

I noticed the peculiar movement of its eyes, and the odd manner in which they were covered by their lids.

Of course, we children ought to have known better than to have attributed such dimensions to the chameleon, because the specimen mentioned in the poem was produced by one of the disputants—out of a box, as we all had assumed. But children are not very keen logicians in such cases ; and besides, the box might have been a large one, and the threat of eating the chameleon have been all the more forcible.

Since that visit, I had always felt a wish to possess a chameleon of my own, but did not know where to obtain one, or what might be its cost. However, some months before writing this history, I happened to visit one of those wonderful spots in Mr. Jamrach's establishment in Ratcliff Highway, where all kinds of beasts, birds, and reptiles are assembled before they are sent to the various menageries of Europe. On my way I had met a small elephant in a red coat walking leisurely along the road, without attracting the least attention, the inhabitants of that neighbourhood being accustomed to such visitors. While there, I saw a man put his hands into an old bird-cage and bring out a whole mass of living chameleons.

I think I never saw a more comical sight. They were so mixed up together that at first it was almost impossible to distinguish them. Their odd, hand-

like feet were either grasping each other, or feeling about in the air for something to seize. Their heads were all still, but their eyes rolled about in the strangest fashion, and their long, curling tails were being continually rolled up and straightened again, like the trunks of very tiny elephants.

Finding that the price of these creatures was not very high, I purchased a fine strong-looking specimen, put it into a little cage, wrapped it up carefully in brown paper, and carried it home.

On taking it out of the cage, I was surprised to find how tightly the creature could grasp, and could appreciate the admirable manner in which it was adapted for its life among the trees. Its little feet seized my hand so forcibly as to pinch up the skin into folds, and, as the little hooked claws were very sharp, it was not easy to remove them without causing a scratch.

I then placed my hand against the window curtains, and the chameleon crawled to the curtain, clung to its edge, and, as if delighted with the firm hold of the net, began steadily to ascend. Up it went with a deliberate and decided air, strangely contrasting with its former bewildered manner. It seemed as if it knew what to do, and meant to do it. When it had ascended a few feet, I stopped it and tried to remove it, but the creature clung so tightly that I could not pull it off, and was obliged to stand on a chair for the purpose of removing it gently. I

forget how much time was occupied in the process, I being then inexperienced in an art which I was afterwards obliged to practise very frequently.

The task was like that of Sisyphus. Two hands were required to open the foot and disengage the net from the claws ; and as the creature held to a different part of the curtain with each foot, got its tail round a tassel, and generally contrived to renew its grasp with the first foot while I was removing the last, and possibly to seize the curtain again with all its feet while I was unrolling the tail, it will be seen that the task was not a very easy one.

My next business was to provide the animal with a suitable residence ; so I chose a branch with several forked twigs, fastened the end of it into a piece of deal board, and fixed it on the wall so that the branch projected forwards.

Here the creature lived for some time, and seemed tolerably contented. It turned out, however, to be of a more roving disposition than I had thought to be in the nature of chameleons. It was fond of traversing the branch from end to end, though its movements were almost absurdly deliberate. It never thought of lifting one foot unless the other three feet and the tail were firmly fixed, and sometimes would stand for hours together with one foot raised in the air, like a pointer when he comes to the scent of game. If, while it was on the branch, I touched or disturbed it in any way, the creature would gather its body together, make

its ribs swell, and roll its tail into a tight spiral. Sometimes, if it were very angry, it used to puff up its throat into a large pouch, and produce a kind of odd but faint buzzing sound, as if a swarm of very small bees had settled in its interior. It seemed to be as harmless a creature as could be conceived, and not even to have the least idea of biting, though its mouth is filled with tolerably sharp and pointed, though very small, teeth, which can be used with effect on certain occasions.

But, although the chameleon is so utterly harmless a being, it possesses the useful art of assuming a very menacing, not to say venomous, aspect, and has been known to deter a foe from attack, simply on account of its minatory gestures.

One of my friends, on returning to his house, saw a small terrier dog dashing at some object on the pillar of his garden gate. Thinking that the dog must have found a rat, and driven it to bay, he went quickly forward to give his assistance ; but when he arrived at the spot he found that his chameleon had escaped, and must have been crawling over the pillar when it was espied by the dog. The chameleon was standing squeezed up against a projection of the stone, with its two fore-paws uplifted in a threatening manner, and was hissing like an angry cat. The dog was in a fury of excitement at the strange creature, and continually leaped at it with an angry bark ; but its courage was not proof against the menacing

attitude of the reptile ; and each time that it made an attack, it recoiled before the uplifted paws and open mouth.

During this time the colour of the chameleon was more splendid than its owner had ever before witnessed, being striped and spotted with vivid yellow upon deep black. It was no wonder that a dog should be afraid of so odd a being. On seeing that the reptile was owned, the dog ran away. The chameleon was picked up and carried home, and was found to have suffered no hurt. This faculty of simulating a power of injury is widely spread throughout the animal kingdom. The angry dove will puff out her feathers, ruffle her wings, and look as combative as a hawk. A ringed snake will assume the attitude and imitate the action of a viper ; while among insects there are many, such as the drone flies, hoverers, scorpion flies, staphylinidæ, and various other creatures, which act, when captured, exactly as if they possessed a poisonous sting.

Once, while I was seated at my desk, I had heard a curious scraping or scratching sound, and on looking to ascertain the cause, found that it was occasioned by the chameleon, which was doing its best to escape, and, in fact, did at last contrive to get away from its perch. The method adopted was as follows :—

Having taken the precaution to twist the end of its prehensile tail round a little projection, and to

grasp the twig firmly with the hind-feet, the creature stretched itself away from the branch towards the edges of some letters which were hanging on a wire driven into the wall. After a vast amount of exertion, the chameleon shifted its tail so as to allow a greater scope of movement, made another attempt, and with one of its feet just managed to seize the upper corner of one of the letters. It needed nothing more. Having secured one foot, the animal slightly loosened the hold of the tail, so that the second fore-foot followed the first. One hind-leg was then brought forward, grasped the letter, and the rest of the body and tail at once followed.

The skull of the chameleon is oddly formed, with a very small hollow for the brain, a very large orifice on each side for the reception of the curious eyeball, and some deep ridges on the back of the skull. In one species, the fork-nosed chameleon, the great mass of the skull is made up of bony projections, and in either case the head of the chameleon affords a difficult subject for phrenological science. Judging from the habits of the animal, one might say that Cautiousness was very large, Combativeness very small, and Firmness totally absent.

It is worthy of remark, that in fixing the hind-feet, the chameleon seems to place no dependence on the sight, trusting entirely to the touch. As it stands feeling about in all directions with that skinny wrinkled hind-leg, and the ever opening and closing

foot with which it is terminated, it presents the most ludicrous appearance, and seems more like the offspring of some grotesquely fantastic vision than a real veritable inhabitant of earth.

Twice did the chameleon get off its branch, and give me infinite trouble in hunting for it. Under the most propitious circumstances, a chameleon is likely to escape observation ; and it may easily be imagined that a hunt after a missing chameleon in a room crammed with all kinds of miscellanea, from books, carpenter's tools, and marine curiosities, down to walking-sticks and any number of boxes, would be no easy matter.

The first search was speedily rewarded with success, for in less than a quarter of an hour I found the creature very comfortably clinging to the pipe of my gas-stove. Why it had chosen such a locality I could not say, as the stove had not been lighted, and so the chameleon could not have been attracted by the warmth. The second search was more prolonged and less successful. I had seen the chameleon just before breakfast seated as usual on its branch. Immediately after breakfast I looked into my room, and, to my dismay, found the branch empty and the chameleon gone. I spent all the morning in fruitless search, and, after wasting several hours, made up my mind that my strange pet was lost. It was evident that in order to escape from the branch it must have dropped to the ground, a height of about six feet, as

there was no other method by which it could have gained its freedom.

I was much alarmed lest Pret, who was also in the room, might have eaten the chameleon. I knew, however, from Pret's fastidious appetite, that he would never eat the whole of the reptile, and, acting on this supposition, I searched the room carefully for any stray legs or tail that might be lying about. Not finding any fragments of the chameleon, I could only presume that it had crept out of window and fallen into the garden, a depth of fourteen or fifteen feet, and been killed by the shock. So I looked with equal care under the window, but could find no signs of the missing animal.

About five o'clock in the afternoon of the same day I was looking out of my window, which has a due southern aspect, and, to my mingled delight and amusement, spied my little friend clinging tightly to the bricks outside, and serenely basking in the broiling sunshine.

I certainly had no idea that a chameleon could be such a wanderer. It was seldom content to be still, but was in the habit of attempting all sorts of effort at escape. So at last I was obliged to restrain it in some way, and finally secured it by tying a soft piece of scarlet silk braid loosely round one of its hind-legs, and making a loop on the other end, so that I could pass the loop over any projection whenever I wished to shift the creature from one place to another. The

scarlet colour, too, was advantageous, as it served as a kind of beacon whereby the position of the chameleon was indicated, and enabled me to find the creature readily if it strayed.

Such a precaution was quite necessary, for the chameleon could span a wonderfully wide gap, holding firmly by the prehensile tail and one hind-leg, and projecting itself into mid-air. In this position it would sustain itself for a considerable time, and irresistibly reminded me of the attitudes assumed by many of the looper caterpillars, such, for example, as those of the swallow-tailed moth or the currant moth.

This power is possessed to a greater or less extent in all tree-inhabiting creatures, but it produces a more conspicuous effect in the chameleon, on account of the slowness of its movements, and the length of time that it will support itself in a position which seems to a human being to be peculiarly uncomfortable.

CHAPTER II.

MY CHAMELEON—*continued.*

Changing Colours of the Chameleon—The Primary and Secondary Colours—Strange Effect of Scarlet—Distribution of the Tints—Effect of Light upon Colour—Chameleon and imitation Colour of Surrounding Objects—The Chameleon among the Leaves—Adaptation to Trees—Experiments upon Animals—The Frog, the Cattle, and the Argonaut—Theory of M. Milne-Edwards—Effect of Heat and Cold on Colour—Cause of Change still unknown—The Bosjesmans and the Esquimaux.

THE natural colour of the chameleon is, as every one knows, a vexed question. When I found that my animal was likely to thrive, I determined to give particular attention to its changes of colour, and accordingly always kept the chameleon in my sight. During the daytime it was allowed to wander about, mostly on the window-sill, where it enjoyed the warm sunbeams, and had many opportunities of catching insects; and during the evening it lived on its branch, which I fixed just in front of my desk.

I should be inclined to consider that sooty-black was the ground-colour, inasmuch as that hue seemed to be the only tint that was really uniform. It is rather a peculiar kind of black, dull and with a very slight wash of grey, looking as if the skin had been

slightly dusted with flour, and then rubbed with a brush. Generally its colour was continually changing, so that half a minute would effect a complete transformation of appearance; but whenever it became quite black, it retained that dismal colour for a long time.

Towards the evening it always had a tendency to become green, and about nine or ten P.M. was almost invariably of a beautiful verdigris tint. So exact was the resemblance to verdigris, that the creature really seemed to have been artificially stained with that substance.

Of the three primary colours, yellow was the only hue which the chameleon exhibited. This colour always appeared in strange and mostly unexpected forms. Sometimes its head would be striped, like that of a zebra, with waved or jagged lines of pure yellow very boldly designed, and having an outline as sharp as if drawn with a pen. The whole of the body would perhaps be blotched with yellow, or striped longitudinally with a number of little broken lines.

I found that whenever I placed the chameleon on any scarlet substance, its body immediately became covered with multitudes of little yellow disks, hardly larger than mustard-seeds, but precisely circular, and disposed without any regularity.

One of the strangest points in this particular instance was, that the yellow spots vanished as rapidly

as they appeared. I have repeatedly noticed that when the chameleon crawled off the scarlet object, the spots disappeared from the portions of the body that had removed themselves from the influence of the colour ; so that the head, shoulders, and fore parts would be simply black, while the rest of the body, the hinder limbs and tail, were still spotted with yellow. To notice the spots vanish was a truly wonderful sight, the line of demarcation being as distinct as if drawn with a ruler.

Scarlet was evidently a colour that annoyed the animal greatly ; it always seemed uneasy while placed on any scarlet substance, and crawled away as fast as it could. If I had possessed several chameleons I should have tried the experiment of keeping them in boxes wholly lined with some bright or dull colour, and marked the effect upon their health. Possibly, the reptile may have been discomposed at the scarlet thread which was tied round its foot. Still, if the thread happened to fall across the back, it did not produce the change of colour that might have been expected.

Sometimes the central line along the back served to separate two colours, and I have frequently known the whole of the right side to be bright green, while the left side was dull black.

Perhaps the handsomest, though not the most brilliant, colour assumed by the chameleon was a warm brown, mottled and spotted with black, or black,

mottled and spotted with rich brown, so that it presented an appearance wonderfully like that of a jaguar. It very seldom assumed this hue, and only seemed to do so under much excitement. Fly-catching would occasionally bring out the beautiful spots; but the finest instance of jaguar-like marks that it ever exhibited in my presence was when a blue-bottle fly was buzzing and bumping against a window-pane, too high for the chameleon to reach it. I could not at first imagine what could be the matter, for a chameleon is ordinarily one of the most impassive of reptiles, and to see it really excited was quite a unique event.

In the early morning, after it had gained some warmth through the sunbeams, it mostly took a greenish-grey colour, with two rows of oblong buff spots on each side. The spots were sharply defined, and varied from an eighth to half an inch in length, keeping, however, to the same width, *i.e.* about one line, or the twelfth part of an inch. Bright yellow bands frequently appeared round its legs, as if it were wearing a number of golden bracelets and bangles like the Oriental beauties of the human race. Now and then it would be wholly grey, with a number of round black spots, exactly similar in shape and size to the yellow markings already described.

The popular idea, that it always accommodates itself to the colour of the object on which it stands is erroneous, and, as a general fact, it assumes a totally

different hue. Upon grass, for example, it mostly became yellow and brown, when it reached the gravel it changed to blackish-grey, and when it happened to walk upon any scarlet substance, it invariably broke out into the yellow spots above mentioned.

Only once did it make any approach to this supposed faculty.

I put the chameleon among the branches of a small birch-tree standing in my garden, and allowed it to climb as it chose. It straightway ascended until it had nearly reached the topmost twig, and then gathered itself together under a tuft of leaves, grasped the twigs firmly in its paws, twisted its tail round a larger branch, and there clung contentedly, swayed to and fro by the breeze. I have no doubt but that it considered itself as having escaped, and could hardly bring myself to disabuse it of its error, and to take it down from the tree.

The adaptability of the creature to its arboreal life was beautifully shown. Although I knew exactly on which tree the chameleon was placed, and had seen it ascend the branches, I quite lost sight of my little favourite when I returned from a short stroll round the garden ; and had not my eye been suddenly caught by the scarlet silken braid depending from its leg, I might probably have overlooked it.

In the first place, the body was gathered up in such a manner as to present an almost absurd resemblance to a bunch of leaves ; and, in the second place,

its colour was exactly that of the leaves under which it was sheltered. As the season of the year was autumn, the edges of the leaves had begun in many places to wither and turn brown, while the centre of the leaf took a shining and deep green. Now, the chameleon's body had also become deep green, while the spine was brownish-buff, exactly like the withered edges of the leaves.

With very few exceptions, the experiments made upon the chromatic changes of the chameleon have been strangely imperfect, and the results in consequence but partial. Even the series of experiments made by the French Academicians carry with them no force, on account of the inadequacy of the conditions. Any one who has the least practical acquaintance with zoology must know that in order to study the real habits of any living being, that creature must be placed in similar conditions to those which would surround it in its wild state.

Without entering into other details, I may observe that if any animal be roughly handled, it either becomes angry or frightened, according to its temperament and means of offence, and cannot display those pleasing traits of character for which it is distinguished while in its wild condition. If, therefore, a chameleon be picked up in the hand and set forcibly upon some coloured object, it is treated in a way wholly foreign to its ordinary nature, and cannot be expected to act naturally.

The reader will probably observe that in every case where I desired to ascertain the effect of a coloured object upon the colours of the chameleon, I did not place the reptile on the object, but contrived to make it crawl, as of its own accord, upon the coloured substance, without annoying the creature by employing brute force. Yet the Academicians, in their own account of the experiments, acknowledged that they had enveloped the chameleon in a white cloth, rolled it in coloured wrappers, spotted its sides with ink, and, in point of fact, annoyed and insulted it in every mode that human ingenuity could devise, and then weakly supposed that the poor bullied reptile was going to act naturally.

As to the various travellers' accounts of the chameleon and its colours, they are, as a general rule, totally worthless. Even Mr. Barrow, in his 'African Travels,' declares that, before it changes its colour, the chameleon puffs out its body with air until it has attained double its usual size, and then assumes the different tints as it gradually returns to its former dimensions. Now, I can assert, from practical experience, and having lived with the reptile day and night, that the supposed inflation of the body has no connection whatever with the change of colour; and that, so far from being forced to puff out its body before it can change its colours, it is always on the change, the difficulty being to find it retaining the same hues for three consecutive minutes.

Several other reptilians beside the chameleon are in the habit of changing colour, according to their mental emotions. The common frog, for example, will change from yellow to brown, or *vice versâ*, in a very short space of time. In the case of the frog, where the colours are restricted to two, the explanation of the means is easy enough. Scattered over the skin are a multitude of little round black dots. While they retain their ordinary form, the black hue is not seen, and the frog is yellow ; but when the creature is frightened, the black spots begin to throw out rays until they look like an assemblage of black star-fishes, and they increase so greatly in size that they overpower the yellow, and give to the frog a blackish-brown hue.

There are also several creatures beside the reptiles which possess the power of changing colour when under stimulating conditions. Many of my readers may be aware of, and some may have witnessed, the beautifully changeable colours of the common cuttle-fish of our coasts. Even in the young creature just hatched from the egg, the rich brown alternates with rosy red and saffron yellow ; and while the mollusk is perfectly still, the beautiful colours flit over the surface like blushes on the cheek of modesty.

On a careful examination, these colours are found to be due to a layer of very loose and fine tissue, charged abundantly with minute blood-vessels and

nerves, and containing a vast number of tiny cells, of a flattened, oval, or circular form, and full of coloured liquid. The number of these cells and the colour of their contents vary in the different species of cuttle ; but it is worthy of notice that there are always some cells containing fluid of the same colour as that of the ink-bag. In the common cuttle there are four kinds of cells, namely, deep blue, saffron, light blue, and rose red, and the elegant argonaut possesses all the colours which are found in any member of the tribe.

These little cells are continually contracting and expanding, and, in consequence, the colour produced by their aggregate numbers is intensified or diminished. This continual movement seems to be wholly independent of the will of the animal, though any mental emotion, such as fear or anger, would probably increase the rapidity of the changes. Even after death the cells continue to pulsate, and the surface to change colour, and the same phenomena take place when a portion of the skin is severed and placed in a vessel of sea-water.

Even after the portion of skin has been placed in the dark for ten or fifteen minutes, and all movement has ceased, the fleeting colours may be again produced by directing a strong light upon the severed fragment, or pricking it with a needle.

Many anatomists have given much time and labour to the chameleon, and a variety of theories

have been put forward to account for its change of colour.

The nearest approach to solution seems to be that of M. Milne Edwards, who considers that there are two layers of colouring matter under the skin, so disposed that either can appear, either wholly or partially, and so produce the varied effects upon the surface. Presuming this to be the case, he hazards the assertion that the chameleon may change its colours after death. Now my chameleon did change its colours after death. At the time when it died its colour was dark brownish-grey ; but in a few hours a quantity of large yellow blotches had broken out over its body ; and on the following morning the skin was almost entirely yellow, with the exception of a few black spots and mottlings.

I kept it for several days after its death, in order to discover whether any further changes occurred, and found that, although the yellow and black seemed to be contending for the mastery—one colour predominating at noon, for example, and the other at nightfall—no other hue made its appearance.

The chameleon was strangely sensitive to heat and cold. It could never be too hot. In the broiling days of summer the chameleon was fond of climbing out of the window, which has a due southern aspect, and settling itself into a corner where the sunbeams beat continually, and where shelter from wind was to be found. This spot was so intensely heated by the

meridian sun that my fingers could not endure the contact with the wall. And yet this was the very place that the chameleon liked best, its skin seeming to be quite impenetrable by heat.

It could not endure cold. Sometimes in the early morning, though in the midst of summer, I have entered my study, and found the chameleon literally stiff with cold, and have been obliged to light my little gas-stove before the creature would show signs of life. Many persons find that on a very cold day their lips stiffen and cannot form words ; so it was with this chilly reptile, except that its whole body was stiffened and incapable of movement. I noticed that cold and heat had a *similar* effect upon the colouring. If the chameleon were very cold, it was always black ; and if the reptile were crouched up in the hot corner just mentioned, it was mostly black.

As to this curious fact, it may not be irrelevant to observe that in the human race a similar phenomenon occurs, the extreme of cold and heat producing colours almost identical. We all know that the tropical negro is black, and that the European, inhabiting a temperate country, is white. But it is also well known that the coldest countries often produce a darker race than the inhabitants of the tropics. For example, the Esquimaux, that pass all their lives in a climate where mercury will freeze in winter, and houses are made of snow instead of stone, are nearly as

dark-skinned as some of the Kaffirs of Southern Africa, and much darker than the Bosjesmans who inhabit the same land.

Interesting as are the observations of learned anatomists, and curious as are their discoveries of the beautiful apparatus whereby this change of colour is effected, an inquiring mind cannot but admit that our knowledge of this subject is still very superficial.

We know that the colours already exist in their pigment cells, and that, in some animals at least, the rapid change of colour is effected by the contraction and expansion of these cells ; but we are still very far from the true cause. We know the mechanism, but of the exciting cause we are profoundly ignorant. No one can tell how the pigment cells are acted upon, or can even hazard a conjecture at the law which shall invariably bring a certain colour to the surface by means of a certain external stimulant, such as light, or the rougher contact of a pointed instrument. We do not even know the apparently simple process of blushing in the human being ; that is to say, we do not know how it is that a mental emotion should affect the circulation, and either dye the cheek scarlet with the blush of modesty, or blanch it with the white symbol of terror.

When, therefore, we find so complicated a blush—if we may use the term—arising on the whole surface of the chameleon, tinting one portion with yellow, another with green, and another with brown ; and,

moreover, see the coloured portions of the skin formed into lines, disks, or marblings, clear and well-defined, as if outlined with pencil and compasses, we may well confess ourselves baffled before a problem of such intricacy. Why one mental emotion should straight-way cover the chameleon's cheeks and sides with yellow streaks like those of the zebra, or another emotion cause its body to be suddenly spotted with black upon a green ground, is a question that will not be rightly answered until we have vastly extended the field of philosophical inquiry



CAT AND CHAMELEON.

CHAPTER III.

MY CHAMELEON—*concluded.*

The Chameleon walking—Structure and Uses of the Feet—Uses of the Tail and Mode of applying it—In the Tree and on the Ground—How to imitate a Chameleon's Walk—Mode of Feeding—Tongue of the Chameleon compared with that of the Toad—The Chameleon at Dinner—Inconveniences of Long Legs—How Chameleons drink—Limbs of the Chameleon—A Sad Accident—Eye of the Chameleon ; its Structure and Uses—Mental Capacities—Dr. Weissenborn's Theory—Jealousy and Murder—Additional Experiences.

I OFTEN used to take the chameleon out in the garden, and there watch its strange habits.

The reptile could get over the ground at a tolerable pace ; that is to say, it would win a race against a tortoise. Its mode of progression can scarcely be named ; it was not walking, nor running, nor sprawling, nor waddling, but a unique mixture of them all. It bore about the same relation to the walk of

ordinary animals as does the hobble of a man with two wooden legs to the stately march of a drum-major in the Guards.

The feet are planted at a considerable distance from the body, so that the effect is peculiarly awkward, and the walk degenerates into a staggering waddle. Their structure, moreover, is by no means designed for walking, for they have no soles, and by the mere mechanical force of the muscles and tendons continually grasp at every projection instead of being set firmly on the ground. They are essentially designed for climbing, and, though they enable their owner to progress upon the ground, indicate by their grotesque awkwardness their ill-adaptation for such a purpose. When walking, the chameleon always seems in a desperate hurry, the long body swagging from side to side, and the thin skinny legs almost refusing to bear the burden imposed upon them.

One curious habit of the creature while walking is, that it carries its tail in a nearly straight line, stiff, and slightly curved upwards, irresistibly reminding the observer of a pump-handle, and exhibiting a notable contrast with the flexible and easy movements of the same organ while the chameleon is on a tree. Indeed, it almost seems as if a chameleon had two distinct personalities, for the whole mien and action of a chameleon on a branch are totally different from those of the same being when on the ground,

On the branch it is grave, slow, and deliberate ; often waiting for many minutes with one foot suspended in the air, as if holding a mental consultation with itself where it should direct its next step. The tail is in continual employment, being tightly curled round a branch, the stem of a leaf, or a projecting bud while the creature is quiet, and being shifted with the greatest ease when it changes its position.

There is great strength in the tail, enabling the chameleon to support itself wholly by that member for a short time, though it seldom assumed such a position except in order to escape from its branch. It never held itself suspended for any long time, but soon dropped, and apparently suffered nothing from the fall. If the chameleon wished to draw back from any object which it feared, it always hauled itself backwards by coiling the tail tighter round the branch, and so shortening its length. There is a sort of lithe gracefulness in the tail which is extremely pleasing, for the animal appears almost to possess some visual power in the tip of that member, directing it to any definite spot with extraordinary precision. Sometimes, but very rarely, it would cling firmly to the branch on which it was seated, allow its tail to fall by the side of the branch, and then curl it up like a watch-spring or the proboscis of a butterfly, without seizing anything in its grasp. But, as soon as the chameleon made the least movement, it always uncoiled its tail, applied its tip to some

projection, and grasped it firmly before it dared to move.

I have often known the animal to seize a withered bunch of leaves, or ripened fruit, with its tail, and grasp so firmly, that when removed from the tree it carried away the leaves or fruit, and retained its hold for a considerable time. The manner in which this tail slid round a branch was very remarkable. The animal did not apply the middle of the tail to the bough, and then roll it round the object, as might have been supposed ; but directed the very tip of the tail to the branch, and then allowed the flexible member to glide round the branch, as if it were a tiny serpent. Sometimes, when the branch was very small, the tail would make two, or even three, circuits.

But when on the ground, how different were all its gestures ! It lost all appearance of dignity ; it was clearly the wrong reptile in the wrong place ; seemed to be quite aware of its ungainly and ludicrous aspect, and apparently did its best to escape as quickly as possible. It always appeared to be in a desperate hurry when it was on the ground, started off at once on its awkward hobble, staggered over the gravel or through the grass with equal haste, and never seemed satisfied until it had found a tree, a post, or something which it could climb.

Any one can walk like a chameleon by employing the following rules :—Let him stoop and rest upon his hands and the tips of his toes, taking care to

spread the hands and to hold them with the thumbs pointing directly backwards and the fingers forwards, so as to get his elbows well out. In lieu of a tail, let him put together the first three joints of a trolling rod, and push the butt up the back of his waistcoat as he kneels. Then let him try to run a stipulated distance within a given time, and he will find himself imitating to a nicety the action of a chameleon while on the ground. If the path could be strewed thickly with brushwood and large flints, it would add to the accuracy of the personation.

I noticed that whenever the chameleon climbed a tree, it always made its way to the smaller branches, seeming to feel a satisfaction in being able to grasp the whole of the object to which it clung. This habit was always consistent. It would exchange the trunk for a branch, the branch for a twig, and the twig for a leaf-stem.

While climbing, it well exhibited the beautiful manner in which the feet are constructed for the purpose which they have to fulfil, and the exact mode by which they balance each other. Both feet are furnished with five toes, but they are differently arranged ; those of the fore-feet having two toes outside and three inside, while on the hinder feet they are arranged in exactly the reverse manner, the three toes being outside and the two inside. By this structure the firmest possible hold is obtained, and the creature is in less danger of being flung from its bough by a passing storm.

I only once saw my specimen fall from a branch. The fact was, I had placed it on a rather stout branch of the birch, so that its claws could not properly grasp the smooth and shining surface of the bark. It was using all its endeavours to climb the branch, when a sudden gust of wind rushed down the garden, shook the branch smartly, and down slipped the chameleon, making little scratches in the bark with the sharp points of its claws, but quite unable to maintain its hold. Although, from the shape of the body, it fell quite heavily, it seemed to care as little for the fall as would a squirrel, or any other light-bodied, tree-inhabiting quadruped.

These sharp little claws are beautifully rounded and curved, and of a pale, horny yellow. When the creature is of a green or yellow tint, these claws are by no means conspicuous ; but when it is in a black mood, they have rather a pretty effect, as they contrast with the dull, dark colour of the feet.

In Merrick's little poem, to which allusion has already been made, one cannot but feel some little surprise at the utter ignorance which it displays ; and indeed it is not easy to calculate whether the two 'conceited talking sparks' who quarrelled about the chameleon, the umpire who was puzzled about it, or the poet who wrote about it, were most ignorant of the subject of discourse. All men are liable to err ; many men make mistakes ; but it hardly seems possible for any one to compress more errors into

a smaller compass than Merrick has done. Putting aside the small likelihood of finding a chameleon in Arabia's *wilds*, we come to these lines :—

As late with open mouth it lay,
And warmed it in the sunny ray ;
Stretched at its ease the beast I viewed,
And saw it eat the air for food.

To begin at the beginning. The chameleon never lies down : he does not know how to do it. It can sprawl and crawl and climb and cling, but it cannot lie down. Nor does it open its mouth when basking in the sun ; on the contrary, it keeps its mouth shut so tightly that the line of the lips can hardly be seen, and, as far as my own experience goes, never opens its mouth but to eat, or drink, or buzz.

It never stretches itself at its ease. Quite the contrary : when it is very much at ease, it gathers itself up into as small a compass as possible, arches its back, draws up its legs, twists its tail into a tight coil, and remains motionless. The idea has evidently been taken from the habits of the dog or cat, which do stretch themselves while basking in the sun, though the chameleon does not ; and the happier it is, the rounder it becomes.

As to eating the air for food, that is a fallacy which has long been exploded. Almost everyone knows that the chameleon has no idea of living upon such unsubstantial food, but that it makes its meals upon insects, and catches them with its tongue. Few

persons, however, have any very accurate idea of the proceeding. I had not until I kept a chameleon and fed it myself.

In many respects, the habits of the chameleon much resemble those of the toad. Like that batrachian, it eats living prey, and catches them by extending its long tongue, and securing them on its tip. The two creatures, however, perform this task in a different manner.

In the first place, their tongues are constructed on opposite principles, and though they are both capable of being projected to a considerable distance from the mouth, their mechanism is very different. In the toad, the base of the tongue is fixed close to the front of the lower jaw, and lies with its tip directed down the throat. When, therefore, the toad wishes to catch its prey, it flashes out its tongue with a quick slapping sound, like that which is produced by the action, so prevalent in some schools, of flipping small boys with the wetted corner of a neatly-twisted towel.

But the tongue of the chameleon is of quite a different shape, nearly cylindrical, with a slightly enlarged tip, and capable of being lengthened or shortened like the proboscis of an elephant. When the chameleon sees its prey, and feels hungry, it crawls rather quickly towards the doomed insect should it not be within range, opens its mouth very slowly, seeming by that action as if it were going to

gape as far as the shoulders, deliberately protrudes the cylindrical tongue, which is about the size of an ordinary crow-quill, except at the tip, which is enlarged, thickened, and rounded, seems to take accurate aim, and then, with a sudden dab, the insect is secured and drawn into the mouth. The whole action has a wonderful resemblance to the movement of a billiard cue as the player strikes a ball.

The tip of the tongue has a rather greenish hue, though the remainder is light pink. At its extremity it is covered with a glue-like secretion, which is tenacious enough to secure even a powerful insect if struck fairly, and to give it no time to escape. I have seen the chameleon eat many insects, and never knew it to fail but once, when the fly, a large drone-fly, happened to shift its position just as the blow was delivered, and so was only touched on the side, and enabled to free itself by means of its powerful wings.

Like the toad, the chameleon would eat nothing that had not life and motion. It seemed to prefer winged insects to any other prey, but would eat almost any small creature, provided that it moved.

Although it could fast for a very long period, it had an excellent appetite, and quite astonished me by the quantity of food which it would take at a meal. I once gave it several blue-bottle flies, several daddy-long-legs or crane-flies, a grub of some sort which I found in the garden, some drone-flies, and two or

three caterpillars of the small white butterfly. When it ate an insect or grub, it made a great fuss about it, gulping as if the creature were too large for its throat, and displaying well the position of its tongue. The size of the insect had no effect upon this peculiar gulping, as when it caught an ant on the gravel path it gulped as perseveringly as when it ate a drone-fly or a caterpillar. The toad eats in a very similar fashion, except that when it swallows its prey it squeezes the eyes entirely out of sight.

The long straggling limbs of the daddy-long-legs puzzled the chameleon sadly. They *would* project vaguely out of the corners of its mouth, and annoy it greatly. The reptile would stand opening and shutting its mouth, and trying to swallow these obstinate legs for half an hour together. The toad has an equal dislike to an object in the corner of its mouth, but it is able with its fore-paws to relieve itself, either by pushing the irritating object fairly into the mouth, or by rubbing it away from the outside. But the chameleon has no such capabilities, and is obliged to trust to time and perseverance to free it from its annoyance.

The creature never would touch an insect unless it moved, and was always rather capricious. To draw the attention of the chameleon towards an insect was not an easy task, unless the aid of sound could be called in. The two strange eyes rolled independently this way and that way, but would not be directed

towards the insect, like the eyes of a baby when it is particularly wanted to look at any object. If, however, the insect were one of the winged creatures, which could buzz, the chameleon was sure to find it out. It was only needful to hold it near the reptile, give it a little freedom of wing, and allow it to buzz, when one eye would be quickly rolled round and fixed on the devoted victim. Perhaps the other eye was also brought to bear, but the chameleon was not particular in this respect. I think that a stereoscope or a binocular microscope would be quite wasted on a chameleon.

As soon as its attention was fairly riveted, the head would be raised, and the creature absolutely looked intelligent. Presently the mouth would open, out came the tongue, then there was a smart rap, and the fly was gone. I was rather surprised when I first felt the sharpness of the blow that is dealt by the chameleon's tongue, and the extreme tenacity of its glutinous secretion.

The chameleon would always take its food out of my hand, though it liked the excitement of a little chase on the lawn.

The fact that its attention could be arrested by the buzzing wings of the insect is of some little importance, inasmuch as it proves that the chameleon is capable of hearing even slight sounds, though it has no external appearance of ears, the skin of the head being without any orifice leading to the audi-

tory organs. Internally, the organs of hearing are by no means large ; and when the dried and cleansed skull is examined, a rather small cavity is seen in the bones of the sides, and communicating with the throat.

After it had eaten the enormous meal which I have lately mentioned, the chameleon declined any kind of food for several successive days. When the fly or other creature is taken into the mouth, it is immediately killed by a smart bite, which is several times repeated, and has the effect of crushing the victim into a shapeless conglomeration of legs, wings, and body.

Its method of drinking was as notable as its way of eating. As soon as the chameleon was fairly established, I took care to set some water near the creature in a little white saucer, but never could see it attempt to drink. For the first few days of its residence with me, it drank nothing, and might probably have died from thirst had I not accidentally discovered the method by which it supplied itself with moisture.

One morning, as I was making my early cup of tea, I happened to spill a few drops of water upon the window-sash. Presently I saw the chameleon make for the spot, protrude its tongue, and begin to lap the trickling drops as they rolled downwards. After it had imbibed a number of the drops it began to climb the sash, and thrust its tongue into every crevice

where moisture lingered. My heart smote me for having failed to supply the poor thirsty creature with drink, and I set to work at once to remedy the error by pouring water plentifully upon the window-ledge, and allowing it to run down in streams just where the chameleon was drinking.

I found that there were two good modes of supplying the chameleon with drink ; the one by pouring water upon the window-sill, and the other by dipping a branch into water and placing the creature upon the dripping bough. It is evident that the chameleon drinks the heavy dews that are found in all warm climates ; and from the avidity with which it always partook of the water, I should be inclined to set it down as a thirsty being.

I fear that many pet chameleons must have died of thirst, for I often see queries in the scientific journals asking for information respecting the best method of keeping a chameleon in health, but never yet saw an answer that even alluded to water.

The creature seemed as if it could hardly get water enough. It used to crouch all in a heap, which is its mode of expressing happiness, and hold its mouth partly open, while I poured water into the jaws. It liked to have artificial rain poured upon it from the rose of a watering-pot ; and whenever a shower came on, the chameleon was sure to crawl out of the window, and lick up the rain-drops as they trickled down the walls.

Only a few days ago I was told of a chameleon that had died, and without any apparent cause, as it ate freely and seemed strong and lively. I asked at once if it had been supplied with water, and was told that no water had been given to the poor reptile, because the owner had been told that chameleons never needed drink. My own experience tells me that the reptile is one that when in captivity stands in peculiar need of water, probably because its arboreal life affords such bounteous supplies of moisture, which the dewdrops sprinkle over every leaf, and which are freely absorbed by the chameleon before the rays of the morning sun have gained sufficient power to disperse them in vapour through the atmosphere.

I believe that the idea of the chameleon's exemption from thirst arises from a partial knowledge of some curious phases of animal life. It is well known that neither the frog nor toad needs to drink water in the usual manner, and it is likely that the chameleon might have been thought equally able to exist without drinking. But the whole structure of the two beings is quite different, for the frog and toad are enabled to absorb water into the system through the pores of the skin; while the chameleon, a hard-skinned, rough-hided reptile, possesses no such capability, and must imbibe water through the mouth, or die of thirst.

In the moist atmosphere of a greenhouse, it is likely that a chameleon might live longer than if it

were confined in an ordinary room ; but, unless measures are taken to supply it with water in the particular mode to which it is accustomed, the same fate is sure to befall it sooner or later.

Probably on account partly of the ample feeding, and partly of the supply of water which my chameleon could always command, the creature gained much in weight during its residence with me ; lost the thin, lanky, hollow, starved look which distinguished it at first, and became quite plump and strong. Here I may observe, that almost every delineator of the chameleon has failed in its hind-legs. In accordance with the general rules of structure, these limbs are represented with swelling muscles, such as might be supposed would be required for the purpose of applying the needful force for the grasp. But, in fact, the hind-legs seem to be little more than the mere bone, with a rather loose but empty skin slipped over them, and apparently inadequate to the tasks which they have to perform. The only swelling is just above the foot, and as the chameleon has no power of closing the toes in such a manner as to render the foot smaller, a loose loop over the leg will effectually restrain the animal, without inflicting pain by compression, and cannot be slipped off.

I once found my chameleon hanging by the scarlet cord that was attached to its leg, and evidently in rather a bad way from the strange posture in which it had been retained for some time. It was perfectly

still when I found it, appeared even colder than usual when I touched it, and when it was placed on the table it lay on its side and gave no signs of life. I was sadly afraid lest it should be dead, but employed all available means to restore it.

Fortunately, the sun had just broken through the clouds and warmed my window-ledge; so I put the poor stiffened creature in the warm sunbeams, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing the limbs slightly moved. After a little time, the chameleon gathered up its feet, coiled its tail, and contrived to get on its legs; and in an hour it seemed to be nothing the worse for its misadventure. On a careful examination of the leg by which it had been suspended, no damage was to be discovered, owing, in all probability, to the soft materials of its silken bands, and the very loose manner in which the loop was placed round the limb. Had it been tightly drawn, as might have been the case with animals whose feet were not so strangely constructed, the chameleon must have suffered considerable pain, and might have lost the use of its limb altogether.

Now, I must give a page or two to the chameleon's eyes, structures no less remarkable than the colour-cells of its skin.

Each eye is covered with a kind of lid, composed of similar skin to that of the head and body. With the exception of a very little hole in the middle, hardly larger than a pin's prick, and coinciding with

the pupil of the eye, the whole ball is covered with the defending skin.

The little circular aperture is not permanently open, but can be closed or opened just like the lids of the human eye. As soon as darkness came on, the chameleon was sure to shut its eyes, and could not easily be induced to open them. A strong stimulant, such as a bright light falling on them, was the most effectual method of making the creature open its eyes. When the lids were fully opened, the eye looked quite brilliant, and, considering the general shape and peculiar covering of the eye, its manifest intelligence was rather remarkable. The lids are, of course, of very minute dimensions, and their effect, as they are closed or opened, partakes largely of the ludicrous, the very little aperture seeming so absurdly disproportioned to the enormously large eyes.

It is well known that the chameleon possesses the power of moving each eye independently of the other ; but the wonderful extent of this capability is not so generally familiar.

The eyeballs are of enormous size, and project in the form of blunt cones from the sides of the head. They are set very loosely in the sockets, and can be rolled about in the most surprising manner, being directed to the sky, to the ground, backwards or forwards, with great quickness and absolute certainty. So large are the eyes, and so greatly do they project, that the chameleon is able to reconnoitre in any direc-

tion, without needing to turn its head or to move its body.

This faculty is doubtlessly useful in spying out various insects that live in the trees, without running the risk of alarming them by its movements. I have often noted the chameleon thus roll one of its eyes round when I happened to approach it from behind, and survey me with calm composure, the other eye being perhaps directed to its front, and looking out for prey.

Curious as is this remarkable power, the chameleon is not unique in its possession, inasmuch as the well-known sea-horse (*Hippocampus*) is also able to move its eyes independently of each other.

How wonderful must be the mental constitution of such a creature, and how strange must be the action of the organs of sight upon the brain. With ourselves, the two eyes convey but one idea to the brain; and even in those cases where some defect in vision prevents them from being directed to the same object, only one eye acts at a time, the other remaining dormant by an involuntary mental effort, while its companion is occupied in receiving images from without, and conveying their ideas to the mind.

This assertion can easily be proved by merely squinting (if I cared about being thought scientific I should say by voluntary strabismus, which is as easy to write, but not so easily understood), and then surveying any objects while the lines of sight cross each

other. It will be found that, although either eye may be directed towards any object, only one eye can take cognisance of it, the other eye perceiving everything in a kind of blurred confusion. Yet in the chameleon, it is clear that the animal has the power of receiving two wholly opposite impressions at once, and that its strangely balanced mind can occupy itself at one and the same time with two different sets of ideas.

It used to be said of Julius Cæsar that he was able simultaneously to read on one subject, and dictate to a secretary on another ; but we may be pardoned for supposing that he was likely to forget the arguments of the book, and that the dictated composition would not be of the first order. The celebrated, but now common, feat of playing several games at chess without seeing the board, is not achieved by any analogous mental faculty, for the moves of the pieces are by no means simultaneously invented, nor their combinations simultaneously composed, however rapidly they are announced by an accomplished player.

In point of fact, this feat is but an extension of the faculty attained, to a more or less degree, by all hard workers whose labour is of the brain and not of the hands, and consists in the power of orderly mental arrangement ; keeping, as it were, a number of pigeon-holes in the mind like those in front of an editor's desk, and putting away, each set of ideas into their own particular pigeon-hole until they are wanted for

use. Indeed, to put the matter in a more simple form, these wonderful mental gymnastics are performed by a transcendent capability of thinking of one thing at a time.

Every one knows that a very busy man finds time to do a hundred things which the mere idler leaves undone for lack of time, and that the best way to get anything done at once is to take it to the man who has most to do.

Such mental organisation does not however fall to the lot of the chameleon, the eccentricity of the eyes seeming rather to indicate the utter purposelessness of the creature's mind. Except when it sees an insect and wants to catch it, a chameleon hardly seems to have a mind at all, as far as determination is concerned; and even in that case, if the fly be removed, the chameleon seems to forget it immediately.

Its memory appears to be of a very low order, as far as I could judge, for it never would take warning by pain nor could be allured by pleasure, but would with calm deliberation crawl time after time upon a branch where it wounded itself with the sharp prickles, and did not appear to distinguish the hand that fed it from any other object on which a fly might happen to be placed. It certainly would come towards me, and take a fly out of my hand, but it did so at the very first trial, and I have very great doubts whether it had the least power of distinguishing its owner from any other person.

Whether a longer acquaintance would have evolved higher and better qualities, I cannot venture to say ; but as, during the period of its existence with me, it never perceptibly altered its demeanour, I can but fancy that it would have remained to the end of a long life the same curious, interesting, unintellectual being.

Dr. Weissenborn, who paid very great attention to the chameleon and its ways, has propounded a theory nearly as quaint as the creature of which he writes. He thinks that the two halves of the brain, and consequently the two sides of the body, are independent of each other, and are acted upon by different centres of perception.

Among his many experiments, he put a chameleon into water, to test its swimming powers, and found that it had not the least notion of making its way through the water, or even of floating on the surface, but sprawled about helplessly, and tumbled about like a drunken man. According to the learned doctor, there is no faculty of concentration in the chameleon, which he oddly compares to two animals glued together, each half wishing to go its own way, without any concordance of action.

He also found that the chameleon might be awake on its right side and asleep on its left ; the eye of the right side being open and the colours changing, while the left eye remained shut, and the colours of that side retained their sombre hue. I have already

mentioned that the two sides of the chameleon were frequently marked with totally different colours, the line of separation running exactly along the spine above and the white unchanging streak below, so that there are some grounds for the curious theory which has been briefly described. The 'centres of perception' to which the writer alludes are, of course, in the brain, one at each side; and he is of opinion that they are placed immediately under the influence of the eyes, which are highly developed organs, and of very great size when compared with the dimensions of the animal to which they belong.

As to Dr. Weissenborn's statement that the dark side of the chameleon is always the more convex of the two, I could not find that in my own specimen there were any grounds for the notion, the convexity or flatness of the sides seeming to be wholly unconnected with their colour.

The chameleon always slept at an early hour, or at all events closed its eyes and became green, which seems to be the surest indication of sleep in this strange being. When in this condition it would allow itself to be handled, and even removed from the branch, without opening its eyes or giving the least sign of life. It always used to crouch upon its bough before it composed itself to rest, gathered itself into a small compass, and further secured itself by rolling its tail tightly round another spray of the same branch. The fork was its favourite position.

One of my friends possessed for some time a specimen of the African chameleon. Its owner (Col. A. W. Drayson, R.A.), who was stationed at the Cape during the first Kaffir war, and was then a subaltern, lived in a 'wattle-and-daub' house, *i.e.* a domicile constructed of rough wicker-work, thickly plastered with mud.

A Zulu boy brought him a chameleon, for whose convenience he sharpened and drove into the wall a stick about four feet in length and half an inch in diameter. On this stick the reptile lived for some time, until its master gave it a 'run' in the open air. Stupid as a chameleon may be, the creature saw its opportunity, and absconded.

Its owner, in a letter to me, complained that the chameleon did not come up to his expectations in the way of changing colour. In repose, it was almost entirely yellowish green, but it sometimes became dark green, and occasionally a few brown spots would make their appearance.

I have very little doubt that when my friend's chameleon made its escape, it was in reality close at hand, but had assimilated itself to the colour of surrounding objects, and could not be detected. The creature could not have travelled to any distance, on account of its exceeding slowness of movement.

A correspondent who has favoured me with an account of a pet chameleon which he kept for a considerable time, found out by his own experience that

if a chameleon is to live, it must have plenty of water. Like me, he did not content himself with merely dipping a branch in water, but used to pour water down the reptile's throat out of a tea-spoon, and 'Cham,' as he was called, seemed to look expectantly for his draught.

'Cham' would do what my own pet never could be persuaded to attempt. He would eat raw meat if cut into very fine strips. Now, my specimen never would eat anything that was not alive and did not move. In all other respects, the life history of Cham was identical with that of my own pet.

I now come to the last scene in my chameleon's life.

One morning I went down to breakfast as usual, leaving the chameleon sitting on the top of my writing-table, and with one end of the scarlet thread looped over a nail in the neighbouring wall. After breakfast I returned to the study, and, on looking for the chameleon, found that it was hanging by its string, as had before been the case. I picked it up at once, and was startled to find my hand wet and clammy with something which proved to be blood. On examining the creature, I found that it had lost its tail, both its fore-legs, and that its ribs and skull were utterly crushed; while under the chair sat Pret, the author of the deed, looking askance at me and evidently feeling as a culprit ought to feel.

I am fully persuaded that Pret killed the chame-

leon through sheer jealousy, for he had not attempted to eat it. Of course I had to scold him and send him into the garden ; but as I had no second chameleon to be preserved from his teeth, there was no use in punishing him for his crime. He had been left alone in the room with the chameleon day after day, and even when it crawled close to his nose he would only stretch out his neck, prick his ears forward, sniff contemptuously, and sink back to repose. But Pret always was a terribly jealous cat, and never could endure me to show any attention towards any creature but himself.



THE COAITI-MONDI.

CHAPTER IV.

The HEDGEHOG, and its Suitability as a Pet—The Poacher, the Game-keeper, and the Hedgehogs—Some Captive Hedgehogs—How they hibernated—Their Young—Experiments on Food—Their Value in exterminating Cockroaches—Ultimate Fate of the Pets—Objections made to the Hedgehog—Game-destroying, Egg-breaking, Cow-sucking, and Apple-stealing—The Nurse and the Hedgehog—Its Untimely End—Hedgehogs in Devonshire—The Intemperate Hedgehog and the FERRET—A Ferret's Vengeance—The COAITI-MONDI—Biography of 'Kiko'—Hotel Kiko—Feud with the Gardener—Kiko and the Rotten Egg—Tobacco Oil—Nature's Pocket-handkerchief—The Stolen Pancake—A Wayward Tail—Practical Jokes—

Strange Fear of Ropes—Blind-man's Buff—'Mae diawl yn dod'—Penitence when Detected—Ignominious Death—The MONKEY—Poultry and Partridge—A Broken Heart.

HAVING always possessed a sort of Bohemian love of eccentricity, I am ever glad when my correspondent is kind enough to furnish me with authentic histories of pets which do not belong to the ordinary 'domestic animals.' Fortunately, I am able to present my readers with many biographies of such animals which have been in friendly relations with human beings.

The hedgehog, for example, is not an animal which is usually advanced to the rank of a pet, and very few persons seem to have taken any interest in it.

In the first place, its habit of coiling itself up with its *chevaux de frise* of bristles is very unsociable, as it seems to take for its watchword the Scotch motto, 'Nemo me impune lacessit.' In the next, it does not appear to possess much intellect, and its armoury of sharply pointed prickles renders it unpleasant to handle. Capt. Mayne Reid tells a story which gives an amusing illustration of the power of these weapons.

A poacher had set some snares, and suspected that the keeper was watching for him. So, knowing, as these marauders do know, the haunts of the wild animals, he caught four hedgehogs. He put one into each of his three pockets, and tied up the other in his handkerchief, carrying it in his hand, and then sauntered by the snares.

As he had guessed, the keeper was looking out for

him, and, seeing the bulging pockets, naturally thought that the man had some game in them. So he seized the man by the collar with one hand, and thrust the other into one of his swollen pockets, pricking himself severely against the concealed hedgehog. Simultaneously the poacher wrenched himself loose, and hit the keeper in the face with the hedgehog in the handkerchief. He defied the keeper to prosecute, because hedgehogs were not game, and he only struck in self-defence after being assaulted.

I have, however, seen a tame hedgehog, which allowed itself to be carried about by the children, and was on very good terms with the house dog, a large black-and-tan terrier. The bristles might seem to be a hindrance towards its capabilities as a playfellow.

At first I was rather surprised to see the animal carried upon the bare arms. The hedgehog, however, while with those whom it knew, always lowered its prickles, and was as harmless as a rabbit. I noticed that when the prickles were thus lowered, their points slightly crossed.

Shortly before writing these lines I received from a lady a singularly interesting account of some hedgehogs and their young families.

‘In the middle of the spring of 1881 I bought a hedgehog. I weighed it, and found that it was $1\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. in weight.

‘I put it in the kitchen cupboard to catch cockroaches, and next day found that it had given birth

to five living young ones. Three of them were light in colour and two were dark. Another was dead when it was found. Their spines were as soft as silk, and felt to the touch something like a clover flower when we pull out the little blossoms and suck the honey.

‘The poor mother could not settle anywhere, and carried her young about in her mouth like a cat, they squealing all the while like little pigs. At last she put them on the cold tiles at the bottom of the cupboard, and the result was that two of them died. I gave two to the museum. I then made her a soft bed in a kennel in the garden, and left her undisturbed with the two survivors. Next morning they were gone, so I concluded that she must have eaten them.

‘Then I thought I would see whether hedgehogs would breed in captivity. So I procured a male, and put them both into the garden, which is some forty feet square.

‘Towards the end of autumn they began to prepare for hibernation. I saw them carrying leaves in their mouths to make their winter home. They chose a space behind a dust-bin, so that we could not see it. I put the female in the scales just before she hibernated, and found that she weighed rather more than $2\frac{1}{4}$ lbs.

‘One day in the following June (1882), my brother came to say that five or six little hedgehogs were running about on the grass. They were about a month old when first discovered.

‘I tried a good many experiments with their food,

partly because gamekeepers and farmers kill them under the idea that they destroy pheasants and partridges, break and eat eggs, suck cows dry, and carry off apples by rolling themselves over the fruit and sticking their spines into it. Not having any pheasant or partridge eggs, I put some hen's eggs and apples on the track which they always followed, and never found either the eggs or the apples disturbed.

'I never tried them with living birds, but am sure that they never ate living mice. The food which I regularly placed for the hedgehogs attracted plenty of mice, and as their numbers rather increased than diminished, it was evident that the hedgehogs did not destroy them. Dead mice, however, they ate freely. The mice increased so fast that we were obliged to catch them in traps. When they were dead I gave them to the hedgehogs, and found that they were always eaten.

'Frogs and toads they will eat, as we knew from sad experience. My mother had a large pet toad which she had kept for about two years. A few nights after I bought my hedgehog, a sound was heard as of some one eating in a vulgar manner. My mother went to find out what the noise could mean, and in the dim twilight saw the hedgehog with the hind-legs of the toad hanging out of its mouth.

'The hedgehogs would eat worms, earwigs, and a variety of insects, but they would not touch slugs, centipedes, nor woodlice. As to cockroaches, a

hedgehog can eat about two hundred at a meal. Our kitchen swarms with these insects, and every night we caught several hundreds. They were killed by boiling water, which was then drained off, and the dead insects given to the hedgehogs, who devoured them greedily. We often gave them the cockroaches alive, and with the same result. I have often taken the hedgehogs into the kitchen at night, and sat in the dark listening. It was easy to tell when a hedgehog caught a cockroach, on account of the loud crunching and lip-smacking noise which these animals make while eating.

‘I used to feed the eight of them with bits of liver, fat, biscuit, bread and butter, and milk, and they always had plenty of water to drink. Some of them would eat grapes, so I suppose that they do sometimes take a little vegetable food.

‘When hedgehogs are angry they always snort and puff in a most absurd manner. Once when I introduced two hedgehogs to each other, they began to puff and blow, and I think that they must have fought, as some little time afterwards one of them died. The young hedgehogs used to quarrel in the same way over their food. At last, each of them would seize a piece in its mouth, run away with it to the nest, and eat it there. I never knew a hedgehog even try to bite, but on one occasion, and on that occasion only, when I was trying to get a peep at the babies, the mother showed her teeth.

‘Now I must tell you the fate of my pets, for they are all gone now (August 4, 1883).

‘Two of the young ones in the second litter died, one not having been properly developed, and the other, I am certain, having been eaten by the parent. For we heard a good deal of squealing one morning, and the young one was never seen afterwards. Another was accidentally drowned, and, together with three of the first litter, may be seen in the Nottingham Museum. Two I took to the woods and set at liberty, and one I gave to a friend.

‘As to the parents, the male died on July 15, 1883, after having been ill for more than a week ; the female was taken on August 1, 1883, to a village called Plumtree, placed in a thick hedge close to a nice brook, and left to rejoice in her freedom.

‘I would like to add that it is exceedingly cruel to keep hedgehogs unless they are well supplied with food and water, and provided with a place for hibernation.’

In another letter my correspondent expresses her belief that the hedgehog is guiltless of two of the many accusations that are brought against it. The first, that it destroys young pheasants, partridges, and all kinds of domestic poultry ; and the second, that it sucks cows and robs their owner of the milk.

With every wish to see the animal in a favourable light, I have now no doubt that it must be found guilty on both these counts.

As to game and poultry killing, the weight of

positive evidence is too strong for refutation. The hedgehog has been detected in destroying bantams, fowls, young turkey poults, and partridges, and one of these animals was taken in a cage wherein was a hen pheasant. It had killed and partly eaten the pheasant, and there can be little doubt that another pheasant, which had been supposed to be the prey of a stoat, had really fallen a victim to the same hedgehog.

Possessing, as it does, keen olfactory powers, the hedgehog has been known to chase prey by scent just as if it had been a bloodhound or foxhound. Birds cannot leave so potent an odour as is the case with the mammals, and yet a hedgehog has been known to track a partridge by scent alone, and to follow its footsteps with absolute precision.

As to cow-sucking, the following evidence leaves no doubt as to the verdict which must be pronounced.

From personal experience I knew that the hedgehog was exceedingly fond of milk, and had no difficulty in believing that if a neglected cow were lying down and the superabundant milk trickling naturally from her, the hedgehog would take advantage of it. But, until lately, I always thought that for a hedgehog to suck a cow would be impossible, because in the first place its mouth is not large, and in the next, because its sharp teeth would be sure to prick so sensitive a structure, and force the cow to drive the little robber away.

The following account, however, coming from a perfectly disinterested source, places the conduct of the hedgehog in a very different light.

Miss M—— H. P——, who had been staying for some time at a farmhouse near Harrogate, writes as follows :—

‘The farmer brought in a hedgehog, and said that he first discovered the habit of sucking cows when he was gamekeeper.

‘There was a fine cow which was found each morning to have been milked during the night. This robbery was supposed to be the work of poachers, though, as only two out of the three teats were milked, it seemed a mystery.

‘The owner of the cow, therefore, determined to watch through the night. This he did, but with no success, as, although he saw and heard nothing, the cow was found to have been drained of her milk. Being at last exasperated by repeated failures to discover the thief, he lay down close to the cow one night in June instead of going to his own bed. His attention was arrested by a sound as of sucking, and there was an evident movement in the grass or straw.

‘Then he saw a hedgehog in the act of sucking one of the upper teats as the cow lay partly on her side. Those which were underneath the cow he was sure that the hedgehog could not have reached.

‘Presently a second hedgehog came and sucked the other teat empty. He allowed them to finish

their repast, and then killed them both, along with a third which he found on its way to the cow. After this the cow was always found with her milk untouched.'

When I was a child we had a hedgehog which was kept for the purpose of eating the cockroaches. In this task it succeeded so well that every now and then it was lent to a neighbour for a week and then taken back again.

It was a singularly inquisitive animal, and used to pervade the house, sometimes with rather absurd results. Our head nurse was one of the old-fashioned sort—rather an elderly woman, conscientious to a degree, bustling, decisive, and the very soul of tidiness, which was fortunate, as there were nine of us to be looked after.

Respecting this last quality, a perpetual feud raged between her and Sally the under-nurse. Sally was a good girl enough, but never could satisfy the requirements of her chief, who, if she had been a man, would have made an excellent boatswain in the Royal Navy.

I well recollect that one afternoon 'Weston' saw what she thought to be one of the nursery sponges lying in a dark corner. Now these sponges were the chief among the many *casus belli*, a sponge out of its place always causing an explosion. With an angry exclamation against Sally, Weston pounced on the supposed sponge, grasped it fiercely, and learned

practically the distinction between a sponge and a hedgehog.

This animal came by its death in rather a curious manner.

It used to hibernate in a large shed where we kept firewood, spades, hoes, pea and bean-sticks, and other appurtenances of a garden. Before its proper period of hibernation the hedgehog disappeared. Some time afterwards, when the gardener was looking for some tools, he found the hedgehog suspended by the neck in the fork of one of the pea-sticks.

I ought not to leave this subject without one or two general remarks about the animal.

In Devonshire it is indifferently called 'Vuz-peg' or 'Ajiboar.' The first of these names is a provincialism from 'Furze-pig,' while the word 'Ajiboar' literally signifies 'Hedge-boar.'

Then its flesh has been long known as a dainty, and is cooked in various rough-and-ready ways. One is simply to envelop it in a thick coating of wet clay and put it on the fire. When the clay begins to peel off, it is a sign that the meat is cooked. As the clay adheres to the bristles, it brings away the skin with it when the roasted hedgehog is opened, and the whole interior falls out in a solid mass.

Then there is 'another way,' as Mrs. Glass has it, which has the advantage in point of time. The bristles are first cut short, and then 'swealed,' *i.e.* singed down over a quick straw fire. The body is

then roasted at a bright wood fire. The gipsies are great at cooking hedgehogs, and when they have caught one and do not want it at once, they 'flit' the animal, *i.e.* they tie a string to its leg and tether it until it is needed.

Just as I was sending this little history to press, I received the following biography. It is written by a lady who is very fond of 'unconventional pets.'

'One day the groom brought me a young hedgehog. I placed it on my lap and went on working. At first it was very shy, but in two days it became so tame that if frightened it would run to me, and, if possible, scramble up my sleeve. I fed it upon cooked meat, and it used to run round the table, stopping before each person, and ask to be fed. If refused, he used to frown, after his way—*i.e.* by projecting the bristles over his face—and with an angry snort he would pass on to the next person.

'One day his sensitive nostrils detected an unknown scent. He quested about until he discovered a tumbler filled with hot negus. Some of it was offered to him in a spoon, and he took to it so kindly that before long he could not walk, and I had to carry him to bed. Next day, when some negus was offered to him, he refused it indignantly.

'This would make a good Blue Ribbon story ; but it did not end there.

'About a fortnight afterwards he smelled his way to a glass of brandy-and-water—"hot, strong, and

sweet." Rearing himself up with his fore-paws on the edge of the glass, he managed to drink so much that he could not even curl himself up, and lay on his side with his eyes half open and an imbecile smile on his countenance.

'As before, I had to put him to bed. In the night, however, he must have awoke very thirsty and not quite sobered, as he had got out of bed, drunk all his milk, and could not find his way back to bed.

'Finding him lying on the boards, and very cold, I tried to warm him ; but in vain. At last I bethought myself of putting him into the ferret's box. The ferret, apparently finding that he was too piquant for eating, took the opposite line and made a friend of him.

'For three weeks these odd friends were never apart. When let out of the box they always ran about side by side ; and when poor "Piggie" at last died of the chill which he had contracted, the ferret was inconsolable for many days, and sought for him everywhere.

'This ferret was fond of a practical joke.

'My favourite dog at that time, "Bo'sun," was a great, truculent-looking mastiff. He was horribly afraid of the ferret, and when it was let loose in the room, always got on a chair. The ferret was delighted to know that it frightened so large an animal, and would creep slily under the chair and seize Bo'sun's pendent tail. Then the dog would jerk up

his tail, and the ferret would literally dance with ecstasy. Then it would gallop round and round the room, and then creep under the chair for another pull.'

Ferrets, by the way, are uncertain animals. When I was at school, one of my companions had a white ferret, which was so tame that he used to keep it in his jacket pocket. One day he was exhibiting his pet, and, in order to show how tame the creature was, he held it to his mouth as if to kiss it. Suddenly the ferret bit completely through his lip. In the pain of the moment he flung the animal away, thus tearing out the four sharp teeth and causing him to be deluged with blood. Thirty-six years afterwards I had the pleasure of meeting my old schoolfellow. He reminded me of the ferret, and showed me the scars which were still visible upon his lips.

In South America there are some remarkable animals which are popularly known under the name of 'Coaiti-mondi.' They are allied to the racoons, and, like those creatures, are excellent tree-climbers. They have very long and mobile noses, and in consequence have been called by the generic name of *Nasua*, *i.e.* Nōsey. They are easily tamed, and in their own country are often kept in a domesticated state.

I have now the pleasure of presenting to the reader an account of a tame coaiti-mondi which lived in this country. It was the brown coaiti (*Nasua*

narica), which is known in its own country by the name of 'Quasje,' or 'Quaschi.'

'Some time ago, a coaiti (*Nasua narica*) was given to the children by a Swedish captain, who brought it from Mexico.

'When we first had the animal, its fur was clogged with tar, and it was altogether in bad condition, having been obliged to live on salt meat. The men called it "Kiko," on account of its peculiar cry, and had made for it a pretty little house, with "Hotel Kiko" painted on it.

'Kiko was the most affectionate and amusing pet we ever had. He very soon found his way into the garden, and used to grub up the earth with his flexible snout for the purpose of digging out the great lob-worms, which he sucked up with great glee. He also was clever at finding and crunching snails.

'But "Tim," our gardener, thought that he did more harm than good, and, whenever he saw Kiko digging, used to pelt him. Then Kiko would run up a poplar tree, break off twigs, and throw them at Tim, as he worked, uttering the while little derisive squeaks of "Kiko-kiko."

'I regret to say that there was nothing which Kiko loved so much in life as a good *stink*. I can use no other word. A rotten egg was a joy to him—but not for ever, as we soon washed him—but it really was a joy to him as *long* as it lasted.

'He would not eat it—for it was much too precious

to be disposed of in that manner ; but he would dip his long nose in it, and spread it carefully over his hairy tail. When he had used up every drop, he would turn round at intervals, bring his nose to his perfumed tail, and with grunts of pleasure would take long, long sniffs.

‘Once, among the men-folk of the household, there was a grand pipe cleaning, they washing out their meerschaums with gin. You cannot imagine what a walking nosegay Kiko made of himself. If anyone who was smoking a pipe stooped down to pat him, Kiko would fork out the contents with one claw, and do it so swiftly that there was no time for interference. Of course, my father and brother, having once been served so, were always on their guard ; but, even then, Kiko was often one too many for them.

‘When his nose became soiled from digging in the garden, he would clean it on his tail, rubbing it up and down just as a knife is cleaned on a board.

‘He was a fearful little thief, and, whenever left by himself, used to pull open the sideboard and cupboards, and steal the sugar, biscuits, &c.

‘One day, my mother detected him in stealing and beat him for it ; whereupon he disappeared whimpering sadly. In an hour or so, she felt sorry that she had whipped him, and set off in search of Kiko, hoping to comfort him. She might have spared herself the trouble, for when we found him he was sitting up in a waste-paper basket, hugging a rolled-

up pancake, which he had stolen from the pantry, and nibbling the top. He looked exactly like Punch with his staff.

‘He once stole an egg while cooking was going on. My mother saw him, and chivied him all over the house until at last she cornered him. He still kept the egg in his mouth, and when he saw that he must be caught, he deliberately raised his head as



KIKO WITH A SCENTED HANDKERCHIEF.

high as he could, dashed the egg down on the carpet, and “kikoed” frantically with glee.

‘The little animal would always find out a scented handkerchief, roll it up into a tight ball, sit upright, hold the ball to his nose with his fore-paws, and sniff at it with eyes closed in ecstasy. After enjoying it for some time, he would turn round and rub it gently up and down his tail.

‘This tail was a funny piece of furniture, for it never moved to the right or left when he turned

round, but stuck out stiffly in an arch behind. He was very fond of lying inside the fender, and whenever we perceived a smell of burning, we always knew that it was only Kiko's tail raking out the lower bar as he turned. He never seemed to feel a burn, and once quite roasted the tip, which he ate, and enjoyed immensely. It soon got well again, and there did not seem to be any sore.

'Most of our friends had a horror of Kiko, which he knew, and used to take advantage of it. He would gallop furiously at them, making extraordinary noises, with his mouth wide open (he had tremendous teeth) and his nose straight up in the air. Of course they used to rush away, or get on chairs and call for help, and then Kiko used to double up with fun and chuckle most humanly.

'A favourite trick of his was to lie in wait on the top of the garden wall, leap on the back of anyone who was passing underneath, and cling round their neck. It was done for pure mischief, as he never treated any of his friends in that fashion.

'Kiko loved to get into our beds; but my mother rather discouraged it, so that we could only have him on the sly in the mornings. Whenever he heard her voice or step, he used to dive under the clothes and keep perfectly quiet until the danger was over.

'At last he learned to find his way to our rooms by himself in the daytime. He would then creep into bed without disarranging anything, or even making a

crease, and lie with his head on the pillow. When any one entered the room, he would dive under the clothes as already mentioned.

‘Although vessels passed our house and moored close to us every day, he never attempted to go on board, although he was very fond of climbing. He seemed, indeed, to have retained very unpleasant memories of his life at sea.

‘Sometimes he would make his way into our large attic, where oars, sails, ropes, and similar objects were kept. He always trembled violently, seemed paralysed with terror, and screamed incessantly. We often heard this screaming, and always went up to the garret, knowing that poor Kiko had entered it and was terrified as usual.

‘If any of us touched Kiko, he had the power of distinguishing the owner of the hand, even though he did not see it.

‘Sometimes my mother would take him on her lap and hide his head so that he could neither see nor hear. Then we children, six of us, would all stand round with our hands spread out, and one would poke or pinch him. He always darted round and seized the hand that had touched him, squeaking loudly at the same time.

‘He never bit one of us, but always understood that we were playing a game, and enjoyed it thoroughly. We always kept our hands well mixed up, so I suppose that he must have been guided by scent,

‘He would insist on following us to church, and then had to be popped into a high truck while we made our way out of his sight. When at last he managed to climb out, he generally made a few morning calls on the neighbouring cottages. They had a wholesome horror of him, and the women would shriek in their own tongue, “Mae diawl yn dod” (pronounced “My jowl in dode”)—*i.e.* “The devil is coming.” Then they would skedaddle upstairs, and let him work his wicked will on their Sunday’s dinner.

‘Though he went by the name of “Capt. F——’s devil,” he was a most affectionate little creature, and used to smuggle himself under our coats and aprons. A favourite position of his was to sit in a lady’s arms, with his paws around her neck, and his nose safely stowed away in the coils of her hair.

‘Of his nose he took the greatest care, and, whenever he was frightened, always grasped it with both his hands. If he were scolded he would sit up, take his nose between his paws, whimper, and shed great tears. He reminded me of Hans Christian Andersen’s tale of “Punchinello,” because he always looked most comical when he was most miserable.

‘I am sorry to say that he was given away because he destroyed the top of the garden wall by picking out the mortar and throwing the stones down. He soon changed hands again, because whenever he saw a strange woman he would frighten her by getting under her dress and scrambling up her petticoats.

‘Then he was sent to live in a stable, where one day he was either kicked or trampled upon, and was so severely wounded that it was necessary to drown him. We children wept bitterly, and to this day I cannot help feeling angry that he was sent away. What did it matter about the tin-potty old wall?’

Of monkey stories there is great choice, I therefore only give one brief anecdote of a monkey which used to cause equal amusement and annoyance to one of my friends.

‘The monkey of whom I have already told you as interesting himself in my household arrangements, one day watched my cook while she was preparing some partridges for dinner, and probably considered that all birds ought to be treated in the same manner. For he contrived to make his way into the yard where his mistress kept a few bantams which she especially cherished.

‘After robbing the nests of the eggs, he managed to capture one of the poor hens, with which he proceeded to the kitchen, and there commenced plucking it. The noise which the unfortunate bird made brought some of the servants to the rescue; but they found the poor bantam bleeding, and altogether in such a pitiful condition that in mercy it was at once killed.

‘After this outrageous act Mr. Monkey was chained up. Such ungrateful treatment after all his exertions in the cooking line broke his heart. He steadily refused his food, and shortly died.’



THE HAWK PLAYING WITH THE DOG

CHAPTER V.

Various Pets—RABBITS and their Ways—MICE—The Brown and the White Mice—The Prisoner's Pet and its Fate—Singing Mice—A Singing Mouse at Brighton—RATS as Pets—Rats at the Crystal Palace—A pair of Tame Rats, and their Play—Rats used as Food—Rat-pie—A Practical Joke—Owl—Hawks—Starling—The SPARROW—An Ungrateful Bird—A Jealous Sparrow and the Ear-rings—SNAKES and their Habits—The Three British Snakes—TOADS and FROGS—The Baffled Artist—BLINDWORM.

I HAVE had a vast number of pets of my own, besides a great tendency to pet animals belonging to other people whenever I thought that they were not properly appreciated by their lawful owners. I cannot help it,

but if ever I see a creature neglected by its owner, I always try to win its affections, and ensure it at least some happy hours in this life, unalloyed by fears for the future, which the mind of the lower animals cannot entertain, or by retrospection of the past, which is forgotten in enjoyment of the present.

Of course, I have had rabbits. Indeed, my very first pet was a rabbit, a beautiful white Angola, with such soft long hair, and such beautiful pink eyes. I have had rabbits of every imaginable breed, and of no breed at all ; and although I could make but little way with the old ones, used to render the young so tame, that they would scramble upon my knees as I sat on the grass, and take bread from my hand.

No one who has not tried the experiment could imagine the individuality that exists among the rabbits, or that their various characters are marked as sharply as in the human race.

One, for example, was high-spirited, playful, and heedless, hurting himself or his companions in his play, and in the former case displaying extreme anger towards the stone or post against which he had knocked his nose. Another was selfish and sulky, always on the watch for parsley, and kicking spitefully at his brothers and sisters if they came for their share. A third would be always timid and in a fright, scurrying away if a hand were raised, and repeatedly startling the whole assembly and breaking up their sports by striking its feet against the ground, which

is the rabbit's signal of danger. Another, again, was quiet, gentle, and caressing, always trying to climb into our arms, and liking nothing so much as to be carried about in the garden.

Even the expression of their countenances was indicative of their dispositions ; and though, to a stranger, one rabbit's face is just like another, they were perfectly distinct to us, who knew them as a good shepherd knows the face of every sheep under his care.

Mice of many kinds I have had, brown, white, mottled, and piebald, and, rather to my surprise, found that the brown mice were quite as tameable as the white variety. They soon learned to come to the lid of the cage and take crumbs out of the fingers, and before very long I had one so tame as to sit on my hand and allow me to carry it about. Still, I do not care much for mice as pets, for they give so very much trouble. All pets of course demand some care and personal trouble ; but to keep the cage of even a single pair of mice in an endurable state of cleanliness entails such a never-ending task on their possessor, that he mostly is forced to give away his little favourites before many months have passed away.

With the exception of the 'White Mouse,' mice are seldom kept as pets. Yet the white mouse is nothing but an albino of the common species, and is not in the least more clever or more interesting.

The mouse is very easily tamed, and a very engaging little pet it becomes. Many a prisoner has had the monotony of his servitude alleviated by the companionship of a mouse. Perhaps some of my readers may remember that in one of our gaols a prisoner had tamed a mouse, and that the warder took it away from him, and, as far as was known, killed it. The man was beside himself with grief at the loss of his little friend, and became so violent that he was taken before the higher authorities. He was simply broken-hearted. He cared nothing for threatened punishment, but only wanted his mouse.

The warder justified himself by saying that prison was intended as a punishment ; and, moreover, that if one kind of pet were allowed, others must be permitted, and that the discipline of the prison could not be maintained. Still, as every schoolmaster knows, there are many cases where mercy ought to temper justice, and this was one of them.

Every now and then, especially in the 'silly season,' a controversy rages about Singing Mice.

That certain mice had produced musical sounds has long been shown to be an indisputable fact. But the opinion of scientific zoologists was nearly unanimous in holding that the sounds were produced by some obstruction of the throat, and was, in fact, only a shrill wheezing.

As may be seen by reference to my 'Illustrated Natural History,' vol. i. p. 558, I had long ago inclined

to the belief that the song was intentionally produced, and not an involuntary result of disease or malformation. I was therefore greatly interested some months ago, when I received a letter from a young lady living at Brighton, announcing her possession of a veritable singing mouse. She was afterwards good enough to shew it to me. It did not utter a sound during its visit, nor did its mistress expect that it would do so, as it never sang in the daytime, or at all events by daylight. The sound, therefore, was not an involuntary one. I afterwards asked the lady to write a short account of her pet, and I have much pleasure in presenting it to the reader.

‘In October, 1882, I was staying with a sister at Chiswick, in a villa adjoining market-gardens. Being in ill-health I was much disturbed by mice invading my room at night. A trap was bought, but, for different reasons, was never set. One morning my sister told me the maid had come running in the previous evening to call her to the scullery to listen to a mouse which sang like a bird. They distinctly heard it, but would not set the trap, as I had objected to its use, though Alice was “sure Miss M . . . would like it, being so fond of vermin.” I begged her to let me know directly she heard it again, and prepared a harmless trap for its capture.

‘Between 6 and 7 P.M., I was sent for, and, on entering the larder, heard a continuous twittering, not at all monotonous, but variably ascending and

descending in short scales. I carefully moved out some pots, and came to a small piece of board, on which was a black spot, that proved to be the songster. Cautiously putting out my hand, I closed on it, and grasped air; it had vanished down a hole. I pulled the board away, and saw it disappear into the floor.

‘I could still hear the song, and presently out came the mouse running fearlessly about, but again evading my grasp. I then gently replaced everything, and set my trap baited with cheese. In a very short time we caught four or five mice, large and small, one so tiny and black that I thought it might be the singer, and kept it. I had to retire early, but begged that the trap should be examined the last thing.

‘Later my sister came rushing up with the trap. The singer was in it making a great noise in the shrillest key. I heard her all that night without intermission; she was especially loud about 4 A.M. After that she became quiet.

‘Although I have watched her and tried various experiments, I could never find out how she produced the sounds. When she drank it seemed to make no difference, nor when she ate. I have often given her a hemp-seed when half-way up her spiral staircase and after one or two futile efforts to sit up and eat it in that confined space, she has carried it up in her mouth, no change being discernible in her song.

‘When excited in carrying paper to and fro for a new bed, or in burrowing down a pot of mould, she

always sang, on very high notes, a sort of undulating cadence impossible to describe. I think the swallow's song is the nearest approach to it I can imagine.

'As for its compass, she had rather low notes, about those of a deep contralto, which she used mostly when eating and perfectly undisturbed. She also uttered them during the day if she heard anyone enter the room where the cage hung. Her high notes I have no power of limiting, for they became so acute that my ear could scarcely distinguish them. Often when whirling her roundabout, I have heard her gradually getting higher and higher, then a short interval of silence, then she appeared to catch up the note on which I lost her ascent, and descend again, so that I felt sure she must have been singing all the time.

'There seemed to be no rule as to her song's duration, but unless disturbed, or dissatisfied with her cage (she had four) and bed, she never uttered more than an occasional "chuck-chuck" of greeting during the day.

'Some nights she would sing without intermission whilst running about the table, over the edge, and down the cloth, with surprising quickness, then up again into her cage before you could exclaim. She never got on to the floor unless left on a table without a cloth, when she invariably slipped down in peeping over the edge, but was no trouble, being always frantic to regain her cage.

'On other nights she would suddenly leave off

singing whilst running about, for no apparent cause and would turn her roundabout silently—that is to say, making only a muffling sound, like a dog panting violently. This scund was apparently produced through her nose, which worked all the time.

‘I caught her on or about October 24, 1882; she was very small then, and on her death from a dog’s bite, April 5, 1883, had not attained the size of an ordinary mouse. From good feeding, I suppose, her coat was very glossy, and slightly brown, but underneath she was of the usual dirty-black colour.’

The RAT is even more unconventional as a pet than is the mouse, and yet I believe that there are few animals which will better repay petting.

It is intellectual to a degree, as any professional rat-catcher can witness, for to catch an old rat is a feat which taxes human intellect to the utmost. Mr. B. Waterhouse Hawkins told me a curious anecdote about the common rat.

While he was employed in making those wonderful models of extinct animals which adorn the grounds of the Crystal Palace, his workshop was haunted by rats. It seems strange that so admirable a naturalist should retain the prejudices of early days, but Mr. Hawkins has never been able to overcome a feeling of absolute loathing for the rat.

As he had about thirty men working under him, and they carried their dinners with them, there were always plenty of scraps for the rats.

When the men had gone away, Mr. Hawkins used to see the young rats dash from their hiding-places to seize the food. But they were always intercepted by the old rats, who began operations by driving the young ones back again. A few of the old rats then cleared the plates of any remnants, and carried them into their holes. They then returned to the plates and licked them clean.

I have seen and handled a pair of tame rats belonging to some young friends, and prettier, more playful, and more intelligent pets could not be imagined. They were accustomed to run about on the table at meal times. They never stole food ; but when anything was offered them, they sat up on their hind-legs, held the morsel between their fore-paws, and ate it daintily.

They were very fond of a game which I saw them play.

The rats were put into the boy's cap which was hung on the hat-stand in the hall. The boy and his sister then went to the top of the house and whistled. At the sound of the whistle, the rats jumped out of the cap, scrambled to the floor, and then ran up the stairs and perched on their owner's shoulders.

The general idea of the rat is that it is an ill-savoured animal, dirty in its person, and revolting in its diet. Whereas it is delicately clean in person, and equally dainty in its food.

It is ever washing itself, and never eats without

washing afterwards. As to the character of its food no animal can be more fastidious. Of course, those rats which are forced to live in sewers, and are invaluable as scavengers, have to eat what they can get, just as human beings must do when they cannot help themselves. But a rat, when it can choose its food, is the daintiest of animals. When it lives in granaries or cornricks, it wastes in tasting and rejecting at least twice as much as it eats.

This daintiness is utilised by ivory workers. The docks where the elephants' tusks are stored swarm with rats.

Whenever a tusk bears the marks of rats' teeth, it is sure to be of the best quality, and fetches the highest price. The reader may perhaps be unacquainted with the fact that most nutritious jelly is made from the shavings and filings left by the workers in ivory, and the rat has evidently anticipated man in his discovery of the value of ivory as food.

Some admirable specimens of rat-marked tusks, and of ivory filings as sold to confectioners, may be seen in the Technological Gallery of the Crystal Palace.

Not only is the rat fastidious in its choice of food, but it affords a dainty food itself, in connection with which fact I have had some amusing experiences.

Some years ago, I mentioned incidentally in the course of a lecture that the Chinese who eat the rat

habitually, and the Parisians who did so under compulsion, suffered no real hardship, as the flesh of the rat is not only nutritious, but really excellent and delicate food, far surpassing that of the rabbit.

Being pressed by the audience for further explanation, I told them that I spoke from practical experience, and that cold rat-pie (of course made from barn-rats) was a delicacy worthy of any epicure's table.

Reports of the lecture—mostly exaggerated—were published in the leading newspapers, and copied into nearly every journal in the land. An avalanche of correspondence poured on me, and I was greatly amused with the different views of the writers.

A few had summoned up courage to try the experiment, and were unanimous in their approbation. Many asked for details in the manufacture of the pie which would have taken up a whole cookery book if answered. Many more asked if I could kindly send them a ready-made pie, so that they might judge for themselves. Each pie, by the way, supposing it to contain four rats, costs at least 2s. 6d.

But the oddest view was that which was taken by many writers.

They first assumed that eating rats was an offence against morality, and then argued that as they knew that I would not offend against morality, I never had eaten a rat, and therefore was deliberately hoaxing the public. As the reader may not believe that such

extraordinary beings could exist, I give, *verbatim*, one of the letters, which I found a few weeks ago, while sorting a mass of correspondence.

‘April 21st, 1879.

‘Rev. J. G. WOOD.

‘Respected Sir.—I had occasion on the 13th of this month to look in our Weekly paper and in doing so I noticed your *lecture on rat pie* I do not know whether you talk for publicity or what but I can never believe for one moment that you have ever ate Rat pie I noticed in your address of the 20th ultimo about hundreds of people writing to you to know how it is made that I believe is a confounded lie for this last two *Sundays Mornings* I have almost been turned sick on *observing* your lectures on the said *Rat pie* I think the lease you say about the matter the better you are very fond of saying so much about *Rat Pie* will you please make this public the next time you lecture that I the Undersigned write in the name of hundreds of people to protest against your assertion. All we eat now is not pure so I think you ought not to want us to eat *Vermin*.

‘I am, Sir,

‘A BELIEVER

IN HUMAN FOOD.’

A few months ago, during a course of lectures in the Midlands, I was asked to say a few words on this subject.

The friends with whom I was staying were equally incredulous with the writer of the above letter, and could *not* believe that any human being could eat the rat under any circumstances.

One evening, at supper-time, there was placed in front of me a dish which to all appearance was a pigeon pie, and I was asked to carve it. No one would take any ; and when I came to inspect it more nearly, I found that the apparent pigeons' feet projecting from the centre were in reality rats' paws.

Whereupon, I put a portion on a plate, and pressed it individually on all those at table, beginning, of course, with the ladies. They were horrified at the idea, and recoiled as if from a rattlesnake. So I had the pie all to myself, and finished it cold at breakfast on the following morning.

I never have had a donkey, though I should much like to try my hand on one ; and when I was a child, went so far as to save up nearly sevenpence for the purchase of one, having previously arranged a stall for it in a corner of the stable, and calculated that, by the aid of my mother's large scissors, I could cut quite enough hay from the lawn for its maintenance. Not many weeks ago, I seemed likely to startle the neighbourhood by the introduction of some very strange pets, for I received a letter from a well-known importer of wild beasts, to the effect that the emu and the cassowary were on their way, that the three mud-fishes might be expected soon, but that the peccaries

were not yet purchased. The writer had of course placed the letter in the wrong envelope ; but for a time I felt terribly bewildered, thinking that some kind friend, knowing my tastes, had generously presented me with a small menagerie.

With birds, too, I have had a large acquaintance, from the rapacious down to the singing birds. My owl was a stupid creature ; I could make nothing of the bird, though it would take a mouse out of my hand without fear, and eat it in my presence ; and it ended an uneventful captivity by swallowing a large pebble, and dying of consequent indigestion. I think it was too old when caught, for when I came to dissect it after its death, the bones were quite hard and firmly jointed.

As to the hawks, one was a dull coward, and the other a playful nonentity. The former bird allowed himself to be bullied and robbed by water-wagtails and tomtits, and the latter was celebrated for nothing except screaming with a deafening clamour, keeping out of the magpie's way, and playing with the dog. Neither of them, however, was of the least service in performing the task for which they were intended, namely, keeping the birds out of the garden.

My starling was also a failure, probably from the same cause as the incurable stupidity of the owl, namely, that it was too old when caught. It utterly declined to speak, and its perverse silence was attributed to my neglect of an important process.

According to several of my advisers, I ought to have slit its tongue with the edge of a sixpence—a steel blade being supposed to have no effect on the vocal organs. However, I declined to perform the operation, and, as was predicted, the starling did not learn to talk. I fancy, however, that the fault might possibly have lain with me, and that it never learned to speak simply because I did not know how to teach it.

Parrots are such essentially conventional pets that I have omitted all parrot-stories from the present edition.

The COMMON SPARROW is decidedly an unconventional pet, and deserves a brief mention.

One of my friends has a tame sparrow, which is a very amusing bird. His mistress does everything for the bird herself. She feeds him, gives him a bath when the bird is pleased to want it, places the cage by her side at meal times, and is always watchful for his comfort. The bird, however, only requites her attentions by pecking her fingers when he can manage it—and his pecks are really no trifles, as I know practically.

The perverse bird lavishes all its affections on her husband, who never feeds it, and never does anything for its comfort. But as soon as he approaches, the sparrow begins to flutter its wings with delighted expectation, and when he puts his hand into the cage, the bird perches on his fingers, and is gratified beyond measure if he strokes it.

The same lady had some years ago a sparrow which was exceedingly affectionate towards her, and soon developed a jealousy that threw Othello into the shade. No living creature could approach his mistress without being assaulted, and, as he always flew at the nose, the attack was not at all agreeable.

The bird would not even allow the maid to dress her mistress's hair. He used to sit on the dressing-table, so that, by means of the mirror, he commanded a view of the door. If that unfortunate maid should enter, the sparrow would shriek with rage and fly at her, driving her for refuge behind a wardrobe.

Once the lady was presented with a pair of the then fashionable 'owl-head' earrings. But the sparrow would not allow her to wear them. He thought that they were birds intruding on his domains, and determined to exterminate them. She had just put one of them into her ear, when the sparrow screamed with jealous anger, flew at the earring, and pecked and dragged at it until he succeeded in pulling it out of the ear. Then he flew with it in his beak to the dressing-table, on which he banged it until he was quite sure that it was dead. Then he hopped off with his dead foe in his beak, and buried it under a pincushion.

SNAKES I have had, literally by dozens, and always found that after a short time they learn to know their owner, and will permit him to handle them without emitting that most noisome odour peculiar to the creature, and which is more intolerably odious, more penetrating, and more enduring, than any stench of

which I have personal knowledge. Those who have been unfortunate enough to come within nasal range of an angry skunk have said that the peculiarly horrible odour of the skunk is hardly more offensive than that of the common ringed snake.

As soon, however, as it has learned to distinguish its owner, the snake is a really graceful and elegant pet ; and I do not at all wonder at a custom prevalent among the dusky belles of the Malay race, who are wont to catch the beautiful serpents of their fertile country, and to entwine them round their necks, in their hair, or even to carry the creatures in their hands, their bodies rolled bracelet-wise round the wrist. There is much untaught artistic taste in this habit, the golden greens, jetty blacks, and fiery scarlets of those serpents contrasting beautifully with the dark skins of their wearers.

As some of my readers might like to try their hands at amateur snake-charming, it may be as well to put, in a few brief words, the difference between the three British snakes. Two of them are harmless, and the third venomous.

The common ringed snake, or grass snake, as it is sometimes called, may be known by the yellow collar upon the back of its head, behind which is another collar of deep black. The head is rather rounded, and the general colour of the upper surface is greenish, with dots and marks of black throughout its length. This is a harmless serpent.

The head of the viper is flat, and there is no collar

on its neck, but a black V-like mark is on the head, and an unbroken chain of zigzag black marks runs along the spine, from the head to the tail. This black chain is widest in the middle of the body. The colour of the viper is very variable, some specimens being greyish-white, others yellow, and others very dark brown ; but, in every case, the black chain down the spine is present, and affords an unmistakable mark. This snake, as everyone knows, is venomous ; and is, indeed, the only venomous reptile in these favoured isles.

The coronella, our third British snake, is quite harmless, though it has two teeth longer than the others, which might be mistaken for poison fangs. These teeth, however, are not perforated, and can convey no venom. The snake may be known by two negatives and one affirmative. It has no yellow or black collar, and therefore cannot be the ringed snake. It has no V on the head, nor any black chain down the back, and cannot therefore be a viper. But it has a beautiful iridescence on the head, with a kind of shining bronze-green predominating, and is therefore the coronella.

TOADS are much more agreeable animals than is generally supposed to be the case. They are quaint, comical-looking creatures ; they display very curious instincts ; and they require the minimum of trouble to keep them in health. All they need is a cool damp spot, with stones and moss to form a hiding-

place, into which they can retire when they are not engaged in catching prey. An ordinary fern case makes an admirable abode for these animals, its glass sides permitting them to be watched, and the ever-flourishing ferns affording exactly the kind of surroundings to which they are accustomed in their wild state.

Toads want very little feeding, catching their prey for themselves. All that is needed is to put an insect into the fern case, and close the door, for the toad will be sure to have it before it has been very long in the case.

Even a fly will fall a victim to the toad, in spite of its sharp eyes and active wings. At the first symptom of a buzz, out comes the toad, and if it once fixes its gaze on the fly, the victim has no chance of escape. The toad cannot jump and catch the fly, if it should chance to alight out of its reach ; but it will watch the fly like a cat at a mouse-hole, and, by dint of patient waiting, will secure its prey as soon as it comes within reach. The toad will eat any insect, spider, centipede, worm, grub, or caterpillar. It is very fond of cockroaches, and if a dozen or two be put into the fern case in the morning, scarcely one will be left at night. I almost think that the toad would try to eat a stag-beetle, for it will swallow, without hesitation, a ground beetle so large that it might almost be expected to kick its way through the devourer's sides.

The Natterjack toad is really a pretty creature, and makes an amusing and interesting pet.

For FROGS I do not care so much as for toads, probably because I have not had so much personal experience of them.

Yet even the common frog seems to be worthy of a closer association than is usually granted to it. Here is an account sent to me by the same correspondent who favoured me with the story of 'Kiko.'

'One of my pets was a frog, about half grown. He used to take worms and woodlice out of my fingers, and would crawl upon my hand to the tip of my finger, perch there like a bird, and sing (or croak) as long as I chose to hold him.

'I was an invalid just then, and when I felt lonely and my husband was away, I used just to give a little croak to invite the frog to a duet, and he would set off as if his life depended on his song, no matter what the hour might be.

'One day I wanted to paint him in a picture, and tried to take a profile view. But he would not let me do it, and whenever I placed him in the right position he would hop round so as to face me, and then get on my paper.

'Then I bethought myself of putting him in a plate with some water, so that he might be comfortable. This plan answered very well as far as keeping him off the paper went ; but when I turned the plate

round so as to get a side view, he hobbled round also, and *would* face me.

‘Then I tried edging round the table myself, but with the same result, so that I was obliged to hold him sideways while I drew him. But whenever I raised my head to look at him he raised his too, and lowered it again when I began to paint, and so we went on nodding at each other like two china mandarins.



THE OBSTINATE FROG.

‘I had him for some weeks, but one day he hopped out of the window and was never more seen.’

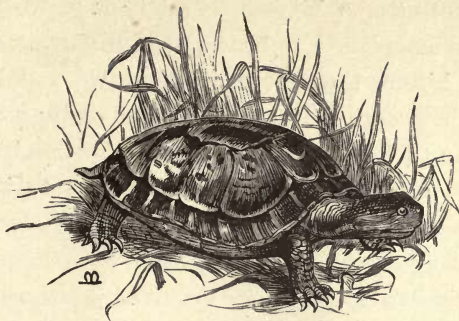
The pretty green frogs are very amusing pets. The same lady who possesses the ungrateful sparrow has about a hundred of these frogs in her greenhouse.

They are mostly tame, and some peculiarly so, perching themselves on various points of vantage, and then expecting flies to be given to them. The reader

probably knows that these frogs have very long toes, furnished with sucking pads at the tips, so that they can leap upon a wall or pane of glass, and stick to it.

One of these creatures took a great fancy to its mistress. But its affection soon became troublesome. It had a way of hiding itself in some unsuspected spot, and then springing out and clinging to her nose. Removing it was a difficult task, and at last the lady became so used to the creature that she went on with her domestic work not in the least impeded by the frog on her nose.

The BLINDWORM is a really pretty pet, and, when it has once got over its natural alarm at being handled, will twine itself about the fingers in a very graceful way, coiling the last few joints of its tail round a finger-tip just like the tail of the chameleon. I need hardly here tell my readers that the blindworm is not a snake, although it looks like one, but is simply a long-tailed lizard without any feet. The junction of the tail is plain enough to anyone who knows how to observe.



THE CHICKEN TORTOISE.

CHAPTER VI.

The LAND TORTOISE—Its Plaintive Mew—Its Eggs—The *Chicken Tortoise of North America*—Its Aquatic Powers—Activity on Land—Its Powers of Climbing—Mode of Regaining its Feet—Escaping from an Enemy—The NEWT or EFT—Its Harmless Nature—Mode of Growth—The SAND LIZARD and GREEN LIZARD—The PORCUPINE—Dogs and Porcupines—Misplaced Affection—The LEOPARD—The BEAR—Tiglath Pileser—‘Jean,’ the Ship’s Pig.

I HAVE tried many reptiles besides the chameleon, the snake, and the blindworm. I have possessed TORTOISES, both terrestrial and aquatic ; and, in the former case, was surprised to find the creature display so much intellect. It died within a few months after I had it, the symptoms being those of poisoning, and, I believe, being occasioned by drinking out of a brass vessel. What surprised me most in its habits was its power of uttering sounds. I thought that a tortoise was a perfectly silent reptile, or that, at the most, it

could but utter a hissing sound if angered. But we were all astonished to hear the reptile mew so like a young kitten, that for some time we could hardly persuade ourselves that the sound really proceeded from the tortoise. This curious cry was only uttered during the two or three days previous to its death, but throughout that time the noise was incessant, and quite disagreeable.

A similar circumstance occurred a few weeks ago. One of my friends had left a sick tortoise at my house, hoping that I could cure it. Nothing, however, could be done for it, and it died, having mewed almost ceaselessly for three days. In fact, I was obliged to put it in another room, as the noise hindered me at my work.

The land tortoise is apt to lay plenty of eggs in the hot months of the year. They have a wonderfully thick shell, rough on the surface, and very hard; the yolk is greyish-brown, profusely sprinkled with tiny spots, and the white is stiffly gelatinous.

At the present moment I possess two CHICKEN TORTOISES from North America. These are aquatic species, and derive their name from the delicacy of their flesh, which is eaten in America like that of turtle in England, and is thought to bear some resemblance to that of the chicken.

They are brisk and lively creatures when roused to action, but otherwise are but slow and lethargic, often lying for several hours together without moving

a limb. They are aquatic, and swim with considerable velocity, as is needful for carnivorous beings which must depend on their speed for their living. When food is placed in their habitation, and they happen to see it, they tumble headlong into the water, without caring in the least on what they may fall, and dash towards the food as fast as they can. I feed my specimens on pieces of cooked meat, which they tear to pieces completely with their hooked beaks, which are as useful for that purpose as the bills of the rapacious birds. After they have eaten the meat, an operation which does not take a very long time, I always change the water, as otherwise a disagreeable scum covers the surface.

When I purchased them, I wrapped them separately in paper, and put them in my pocket. But they contrived to kick their way through the paper, and were continually scrambling out of my pocket and falling on the ground. They never seemed to hurt themselves in the least by their tumble, but scuttled over the ground at a wonderful rate.

Their behaviour when removed from the water is very comical. If I take them out of their house and place them on the table, they remain perfectly still for a minute or two, and then start at once into vigorous action, as if moved by clockwork. In an instant, out pops the head on its long neck, the tail protruding behind as if it were meant for a rudder, the limbs patter merrily over the table, and away

goes the creature at full speed. Sometimes we have races, to see which will tumble first over the edge of the table. If the table were a precipice, the tortoises would fling themselves down quite as freely; and if any creature could withstand a fall of a few hundred feet, I should think that the chicken tortoise was that very being.

When at rest, they lie with head, limbs, and tail all withdrawn into the shell, the long tail being tucked sideways under the projecting carapace. But when taken out of the water, and held suspended in the air, they begin at once to struggle for liberty, and give an excellent opportunity of examining the structure of their limbs. It is rather curious that their legs are gifted with such freedom of movement, that it is impossible to hold the creature in any way so that it shall not be able to reach the detaining fingers with its feet. When thus viewed, the chicken tortoise is really a pretty creature; its eyes are bright topaz-yellow, with a very large pupil, and its neck is largely mottled with greenish-yellow. The structure of its feet, too, is very curious.

When the tortoises desire to breathe, they like to sit with their long necks protruded, and their noses pointing upwards. The nostrils are at the very tip of the snout, and look just as if two little holes had been drilled into the bone; so that, like many other aquatic animals, the tortoise is enabled to breathe without exposing its body in the least. When the

creatures are at rest upon the pebbles at the bottom of their tank, they can hardly be discovered even when pointed out; for their bodies harmonise so exactly with the stones on which they lie, that a stranger is often unable to distinguish them until they move. They are very wary creatures, and while they are lying with their noses out of the water, the slightest movement will cause them to jerk their head, legs, and tail under the shell, as if worked by a spring.

They are continually trying to escape, and I have been obliged to lay a heavy sheet of plate-glass upon the tank to prevent them from scrambling over the edge—a feat which they have more than once performed. The tank is too deep for their forelegs to reach the margin, and I thought that they would be quite safe; but still, in some strange manner, one or the other was continually making its escape. I found at last that the reptile contrived to scale the sides of the tank by mounting on the back of its companion, and then hitching one of its paws over the edge. The extent of their reach is almost incredible, for they can raise themselves on the very tips of the hinder feet, and stretch out the fore-limbs to a wonderful extent. And if they once get a single foot fairly lodged, their muscular strength is so great that they can always draw up the body after it.

To attempt to detain a chicken tortoise by laying it on its back is perfectly useless, for it immediately

protrudes its limbs and head, hitches the sharp claws of the hinder feet of one side into the nearest object, and, with a violent effort, twists its body round to the proper position. Just now, I laid the large tortoise on its back in a milk-pan half filled with water. The creature was sadly puzzled at first, for the glazed surface of the dish afforded no hold for its claws, and it could not raise itself from its reversed position. Presently, however, the smaller tortoise came swimming by, and the creature took immediate advantage of its presence, pressed its foot against its companion's shell, and regained its ordinary attitude. I regret to say that, instead of exhibiting any feeling of gratitude for the assistance it had received, it requited its companion's aid with a spiteful snap as it rolled over. As, however, it might as well have bitten a pebble as a tortoise's shell, no harm was done by the assault.

It is really wonderful how completely these reptiles can protect themselves from danger. When viewed from above, there is scarcely a sign of a living animal, except perhaps a few claws peeping from under the shell. And if it be picked up and examined, it draws the head deeply beneath the carapace, and sinks it so completely into the soft parts of the neck, that a puckered hole only is to be seen where the head had lately protruded; and the spectator cannot but wonder how the creature contrives to pack away its long neck and large head in so perfect a

manner. Indeed, the whole process looks more like a conjurer's trick than a veritable fact in zoology.

In common with many of its kin, the chicken tortoise is a river inhabitant, and if the banks be approached very quietly, hundreds of these creatures may be seen perched on the rocks or protruding stumps, and looking as if it were only necessary to put out a hand to secure them. But the reptile is one of the most cautious of its race, and long before the intruder can reach the spot, all the tortoises have tumbled headlong into the river, with a splashing as of a hailstorm or the quick splash of grape-shot in the water.

I have also kept plenty of NEWTS, otherwise termed efts or evats. They are much prettier than the tortoises, and more lively and interesting in their habits. Many persons have a great and unfounded objection to newts, being as fearful of them as if they were armed with the venom fangs of the viper, instead of being as harmless creatures as beetles. The strongest prejudices, however, melt away before the light of knowledge like snow-wreaths before the sunbeams, and I have made many converts to these pretty creatures merely by showing them and explaining their habits. They should always have a piece of flat cork or light wood on which they may rest ; for, although they are aquatic beings, they like to be able to leave the water at will, and to repose upon something that will spare them the trouble of

coming to the surface whenever they wish to inhale a breath of air. They feed, too, after a very curious fashion, and seemingly try to eat each other, the large assaulting the small, though I never saw the attack succeed.

If, moreover, one of the newts should happen to be about the business of raising a young family, her proceedings are well worthy of being watched. She should be supplied with aquatic plants, the common *vallisneria* being perhaps the best that will grow in an aquarium, and will thereon fix her eggs in a most curious manner, literally tying the leaf into a kind of knot, enclosing the egg in the fold. The young newts, too, when newly hatched, are such beautiful little creatures, with their elegant gill-tufts and transparent tails, showing the passage of the red blood-currents through their transparent tissues, and forming magnificent objects under the microscope, giving some little insight into the living wonders with which we are surrounded.

I have also tried my hand at keeping the pretty heath LIZARDS that are so plentiful upon the commons, and glance about so quickly among the furze and heather, causing many pangs to the hands before they can be captured. They are most active little creatures, darting about the fern case with the quickness of light, and looking very attractive, in spite of their sober hues. But they had a bad habit of dying in a very short time, and so prevented me from trying any experiments on them.

It is not unlikely that the sensitive little creatures may have suffered in their transit, and that the contrast between the fresh pure breezes of the common on which they lived, and the dull, foggy, smoky atmosphere of London, may have affected their constitutions. Yet the lovely GREEN, or JERSEY LIZARDS, with their gleaming raiment bedropped with gold and emerald, thrive well in London, and have undergone a longer and a rougher journey, and must, moreover, find the contrast between the free and the prisoned existences even more decided than would have been the case with my lizards. The fault was most probably with myself in some way, and I still hope to make many experiments with lizards. I would not capture them at all, if they could only be perfectly watched in their wild state ; but they are so restless and quick in their movements, and so difficult to see among the herbage of the commons, that the only way to gain any insight into their real habits is to place them in a transparent prison where the surrounding conditions are as close as possible to those of their native soil.

It will of course happen that some pets are less pleasant than others ; but this point can only be ascertained by personal experience. I have been told by a gentleman, who has had a wonderfully large experience, that the most unpleasant quadrupedal pet is a PORCUPINE. It is such a restless being that it cannot be induced to remain quiet, and it is as

inquisitive as any cat. It is an interesting animal enough, but tetchy and short-tempered, and ever too ready to present the serried ranks of its parti-coloured bayonets at anyone who happens to displease it. Two of these creatures were kept for some time by a gentleman resident in India, and were notable for their continual bickerings with the dogs. They were extremely fond of their master, but they entertained the strongest objection to the dogs. They, on their part, naturally felt hurt that any interloper should come between them and their master, and were deeply aggrieved because the porcupines had contrived to oust them from their accustomed places at dinner. Both dogs and porcupines were fond of the good things served at their master's table, and when it came to a struggle, the porcupines had the best of the contest. If, for example, some delicacies were put on a plate and placed on the floor for the dogs, the porcupines at once must needs push their noses into the plate and begin nibbling. The dogs would snarl and growl futilely while watching the provisions disappear, and at last would lose all patience and rush to the rescue. The porcupines troubled themselves very little about the assault, but simply spread their quills, and allowed the dogs to prick their noses until they howled with the pain.

It so happened that their owner was obliged to change his residence, and of course he took his pet porcupines with him. When evening drew on, he

bethought himself that his bristly pets had no bedroom; and, being afraid of their straying, he searched the house for some fit place as a temporary residence. At last he was obliged to coax them under the boiler in an outhouse, and having blocked up the entrance with a huge stone, went with an easy mind to bed.

But the porcupines, being naturally nocturnal in their habits, and extremely curious, wished to learn something of their new house. So they tried to push away the stone, and not being able to stir it, began to burrow, dug a passage under the stone, and emerged into the kitchen. They then began to sniff about, and at last came on the traces of their master. They followed him up like two bloodhounds, until they reached the room where he was lying in bed. One of them raised itself on its hind-legs, and finding a bare foot projecting from the bedclothes, began to caress it. The owner of the foot, feeling himself disturbed in such a manner, naturally thought that thieves were trying to hold his legs, and instinctively lashed out furiously at the supposed intruder, bringing his unfortunate foot against the quills of the porcupine.

A young leopard, again, is as pretty a little pet as could be desired, beautifully mottled in colour, with smooth soft fur, little caressing ways, and as playful as a kitten. But I have been informed by a lady who brought up one of these beautiful creatures, that for a long time her pet worried her sadly. It had a very

large appetite, and always chose to be hungry in the night-time. And as often as it was hungry, it began to howl so pitifully, and with such a loud voice, that its mistress could get no rest, and was perforce obliged to get up and feed this ravenous creature with warm milk, which the leopard was accustomed to suck out of a sponge.

Even wild beasts, though untamed, have been known to yield to the wondrous powers of the human being. Mr. Atkinson relates a curious circumstance which occurred in Siberia:—a mother missed her two children, one aged six and the other four years, and fearing lest they might have strayed, she went to the forest, accompanied by her husband, to look after them. There, to her inconceivable horror, she saw her children close to a great bear. When she recovered from the first shock of the sight, she found that the bear and the children were on very good terms; for one of them was feeding the creature with strawberries, and the other was actually riding on its back. The terrified mother could not repress a scream, and the bear, on hearing it, simply turned away and went into the forest, leaving the children perfectly uninjured. They themselves had not the least idea of the terrible danger through which they had passed, but were quite full of the games they had enjoyed with the ‘big dog.’

Even as a pet, though a somewhat unwieldy one, the bear can be most amusing, as may be seen by

the accounts of Mr. F. T. Buckland's celebrated Syrian bear, Tiglath Pileser.

In point of fact, the capabilities of any animal for a pet are not so much owing to its own nature as to that of its master. Anyone with tolerably wide sympathies, great patience, ready observation, and firm decision, can train almost any being that draws the breath of life ; but without these qualities, failure must be the result of all such attempts.

As a general rule, sailors are most successful in the domestication of animals. They are so utterly fearless, so childlike, and so forbearing, that they can manage to overcome the roughest and most crabbed of living beings. Everyone knows that a child can have no better nurse than a sailor. The fine fellows take instinctively to children, and children to them ; and they have not the least idea of any false shame if seen while tending a child. These characteristics render them admirable teachers and trainers of animals. They *will* have a pet of some sort ; and if they cannot obtain one of the ordinary and legitimate pets, they will take to the most unlikely creatures.

A monkey is always a prime favourite with them, and, indeed, a captain has been known to state that he considered the 'ship's monkey' as the most valuable of her crew. In default of a monkey, a bear is mostly a great favourite, its attitudes being so quaint, its habits so curious, and its appetite so accommodating.

A ship's bear leads a strange life, very like that of a college dog. He is dressed in all kinds of uniforms ; he is made to eat and drink the most remarkable solids and liquids ; and the great object of his masters seems to be that he should be taught to smoke a pipe—a feat never yet performed, as far as I can make out, by any animal except man and a monkey. The latter animal always exhaled the smoke through her nostrils. Sailors will pet a tiger or a leopard, and treat the terrible beast as carelessly as if it were a kitten ; hauling it about with perfect composure, and correcting it for faults committed, without the least fear of its turning upon them.

There is always a share of the mess for the ship's pet, whatever that may be ; and every man would cheerfully deprive himself of half his rations rather than that his pet should be hungry. They would even go to the extent of sacrificing part of their grog, provided that the creature would drink it—a sacrifice of which none can imagine the extent, unless they have had some personal acquaintance with sailors. A ship's company has been known to pet an alligator in default of a more agreeable animal, and the men have openly expressed their wish that some one would send them a 'cock rhinoceros' to tame.

Anyone who wishes to appreciate the manner in which a ship's company will treat an animal, should read Captain Basil Hall's account of the pig Jean and her treatment by the men. It is positively affecting,

as well as extremely ludicrous, to read the account of that pig, and to see how the sailors took a fancy to her ; how they actually begged her life when she was destined for the butcher's knife ; how they fed her until she was so fat that she could not stand, much less walk ; how they attended to all her wants, and actually put food into her mouth as she lay, huge and helpless, upon deck, a very mountain of a sow, with all her feet pointing to the sky through sheer exuberance of fat.

And then, after she had died the death naturally consequent on a life of such indulgence, they were as careful in disposing of her dead body and guarding it from being desecrated by Chinese cooking-pots, as they had been to pamper their mountainous pet into such a mass of obesity ; rigging out a complicated apparatus of rods and ballast iron, which drove the huge body so deeply into the mud, that even the persevering Chinese could not recover it.



SPIDERS.

CHAPTER VII.

SPIDERS and their Uses—The Garden Spider—Feeding by Hand—Natural Barometers—Web-making—Character of Spiders—Anecdotes of some Garden Spiders—Courage and Cowardice—Ingenious Contrivance—Insect Pets—The Two BUTTERFLIES; their Birth, Life, and Death—A tame Peacock Butterfly—The MUSK BEETLE—Its Activity and Thirsty Nature—Its Powerful Odour—Its Home—Its Feet and Claws—Influence of Man over Animals—Concluding Remarks.

EVEN among beings which we have been accustomed to consider as most repulsive, and from which many persons would shrink in fear, there is much to learn and much to be entertained withal.

Take, for example, those creatures which are perhaps as universally hated and despised as any of our native animals, the spiders of the garden and the household. What universal consternation reigns in

the drawing-room if a large 'cardinal' spider should be seen leisurely taking a promenade across the carpet! How the ladies scream and jump upon chairs, and ring for the footman to crush the poor thing, and the housemaid to follow in his steps with dustpan, brush, and cloth! A veritable tiger would hardly cause more disturbance, and certainly would not draw forth louder shrieks. Ladies seem to be peculiarly subject to arachnophobia, and I have only met with one young lady who could talk of a living spider without a shudder, and 'set' him in a cabinet without discomposure.

For this objection to house-spiders there are certainly some grounds, as spiders are out of their place in our rooms; but there is really no reason why the beautiful cross spiders of our gardens, or the hunting spiders of our walls, should be similarly detested. They are in their proper place, and perform good service to the gardener, killing a vast number of the tiny insects which are apt to make havoc among our flowers, fruits, and vegetables.

Their webs, so various and yet so symmetrical, are lovely examples of architectural structure; and when the creatures themselves are closely examined, their beauties are as striking as those of the butterflies and other more attractive insects. I have found that the mere exhibition of living hunting spiders in a microscope has done wonders in converting irrational hatred into a rational interest; and that the simple

spectacle of the curious heart, pulsating so regularly, the soft yet rich colouring of the velvet-like clothing, and the glittering polish of the eight jetty eyes, has worked marvels in behalf of the much misunderstood spiders.

What a singular and beautiful spectacle is afforded by a view of the spinnerets pouring forth their myriad filaments, which will presently coalesce into a single rope, and give to that delicate but complicated fibre a strength, and yet an elasticity, perfectly wonderful ! It is only by virtue of this elasticity that the threads can be drawn tight, and retain their position when shaken by the wind, or weighted with the heavy dewdrops of morning.

My own garden being of recent formation, the spiders are few and small ; but in the profusely wooded garden of a friend the spiders abound, and I have often watched their habits.

The owner of the garden knows the value of his spiders, and not only will not suffer them to be killed, nor their nets to be destroyed, but is in the habit of feeding them daily. They grow to enormous dimensions under this treatment, and have become so accustomed to human beings, that when an insect is held near the web, they will run down and take their prey out of the fingers. The daddy-longlegs, or crane-flies, that infest the grass, and whose larvæ do such damage to the turf, swarm in the garden, especially towards the evening, and furnish an abundant supply for the

spiders. I do not think that they are able to discriminate one human being from another ; but they have, at all events, made some progress in civilisation, and will run to the hand instead of running away from it.

It is very curious to see the readiness with which the spider takes its easily gained meal. Sometimes the creature is reposing in the very centre of its web, hanging with its head downwards, after the curious fashion of spiders and bats ; and sometimes it is lurking under the shelter of a neighbouring leaf, and presenting a very truculent aspect, with its forelegs peeping out of its retreat, and its black eyes dully glittering in the darkness. In either case, however, down comes the spider with a rush, snatches the fly from the fingers, and gathers it up into a mingled heap of wings, legs, and body, with marvellous speed.

Spiders are capital barometers. They never mend or make their webs except at the approach of fine weather ; their internal supply of silk being limited, and far too valuable to be wasted on wet weather, when the flies will be at home. If the spiders be seen in the act of mending their webs or of constructing new ones, the observer may be sure that dry weather is about to set in. Sometimes even when the weather is wet and unpleasant they may be seen at work ; but a change is certain to ensue, and fair weather to last for some days.

They have no particular time for net-making,

though sometimes they will all set hard to work during the night, and turn out by the morning a perfectly new set of webs. It is most interesting to see them make their webs, to note the wonderful strength of their first outlines; how they cross and re-cross their lines, each time adding a new strand, until they have constructed a scaffolding, as it were, on which they may work. I presume that most of my readers are aware that the threads are of two different kinds, the radiating lines being strong and not adherent, while the fine spiral thread is that which catches the flies, by means of little drops of adhesive substance arranged regularly upon it, like bird-lime on the fowler's lines. These little drops, or rather knobs, are too small to be visible with the naked eye, but they are easily seen under a good pocket lens.

It is very wonderful, too, to see the spider directing this thread, and to see how she carefully holds it in one hind claw, keeping it well away from her body, and giving it a little pull each time that she fixes it to a radiating line, so as to be quite sure of its firmness.

These spiders have a very odd habit. They often sit in the very middle of the web, with their heads downwards; and when they are alarmed, or very angry, they suddenly vanish from sight, remain invisible for a few seconds, and then reappear. On examination, it will be seen that this phenomenon is produced by violently shaking the web, so that the

body of the spider is quite obscured by the rapidity of the movement, just like the spokes of a swiftly whirled wheel. Perhaps this movement may be instinctive, and serve to conceal them from the birds and other foes which prey upon spiders.

Spiders have not everything their own way. They are not merely cruel devourers of other beings ; for they are perseveringly sought by many foes : birds pick them out of their webs ; the great red-bellied ichneumons (*Pompilus*) bury them in their subterranean nests ; and the fierce hornet-flies (*Asilidæ*) flash down upon them like winged tigers, plunge the sharp-edged sucker into their soft bodies, and drain them of all their juice.

Knowing that one of my friends had been making experiments upon the garden spider, I asked him to allow me to make use of his notebooks. In one place he remarks that the spiders have a decided individuality, and that of two spiders, exactly similar in appearance, living within a yard of each other, and making similar webs, one may be a bold dashing warrior, and the other a mere coward. If, for example a great drone-fly be placed in the web of the former spider, the creature leaps at once upon its prey, rolls it up in a twinkling, and carries it off to its retreat. The other, on the contrary, will make a great fuss about the fly, and either suffer it to flap its way out of the web, or actually let itself drop to the ground, where it lies with its legs gathered together as if dead

Having taken the trouble to feed the spider, the experimenter felt indignant at such cowardly conduct. 'Such very disgraceful conduct,' he proceeds, 'could not be passed over, especially as this was the second offence; so the pretended corpse was lifted up by the web which hung from its spinnerets, and dropped into the net of the other spider. Not the slightest movement of a limb betrayed that he possessed life, but our gallant friend was not to be deceived in this manner. He approached his prisoner, gave him a sound tap on the head, then another, and was about to roll him up, when the coward struggled for a moment, freed himself in a measure from his bonds, and instantly dropped again to the ground, where he was suffered to remain, in disgraceful safety.

'I remember reading, when a boy, an account of a mimic battle of Waterloo among spiders; and which battle, as was asserted, might, with very little trouble, be enacted before my own eyes. It was merely necessary to capture a spider, drop him into the web of a neighbour, procure more spiders, drop them in, and so on. The spiders, continued the voracious naturalist, will then commence a furious attack upon one another, and will not cease from the fight until only one remains alive.

'Continued attempts to procure so grand a result convinced me that one of two facts must have been the cause of my failure; either I must have been very clumsy in my manipulations, or the writer could only

have imagined that which he stated to be a fact. Considerable experience has since induced me to believe that the latter was the true explanation.

‘Not more than half-a-dozen real fights have occurred in my own experience with spiders, that is to say, real stand-up fights. Often has a smaller spider been caught in the web of a bigger, and when attacked, and unable to escape, has endeavoured to damage its assailant; but this is only a struggle, not a fight. The usual practice is for the smaller, or more timid spider, immediately to drop from the web or to retreat with all speed.

‘During this last summer, however, I did see a real fight between two spiders. It happened that their webs were close together, and not in a very good situation for obtaining flies; I therefore threw a fly into one of the webs, from which it quickly escaped, but became entangled in the second web. The spider into whose net the fly had been thrown followed it into the second web. As the spider was watching the fly, previous to attacking it, he caught sight of a stranger approaching his web, turned his attention to him, and rushed down to repel the intruder.

‘The visiting spider did not seem at all disinclined for the combat, but received his opponent with outstretched arms; in an instant they were locked together, and the long pinchers of each were buried in the body of the enemy. They remained in this

position for nearly a minute, when the real owner of the web appeared very uncomfortable, tried to escape, and withdrew his pinchers from his opponent's body. It was in vain, however, that he struggled ; he was held in an iron grasp by his enemy, who by no means relented. In two minutes' time the visitor commenced the rolling-up process, and, in spite of the kicks and plunges of his victim, rolled him up in a silken bandage. He then picked his teeth for a few seconds with two of his feet, opened and shut his pinchers as though to try whether their joints were all right, and then slowly approached the fly.

'When he had gone about halfway to the fly, he suddenly seemed to remember that he was not as comfortable as he might be, and that something ailed him, for he stopped, and moved his legs about as though suffering from a sudden attack of spasms. He then subsided into a sort of doze, in which he was left. In the evening, upon examining the scene of the duel, the victorious spider was found to have crawled back to his web, on the edge of which he was clinging. He seemed very bad, and had apparently paid dearly for his victory ; his appetite had forsaken him, his disabled foe not having been eaten, and the fly having escaped. On the following morning the successful hero of the fight was found to have departed this life, having died of his wounds during the night.

'If this one combat be a type of those which

usually result from an encounter between two spiders, it is undoubtedly a wise proceeding for one to drop from the web as soon as the other threatens an attack.'

These accounts are mostly of a warlike character, probably on account of the profession of the writer, which naturally induces him to see the combative rather than the peaceful side of the character.

I lately saw a wonderful example of ingenuity displayed by a spider.

Another of my friends used to shelter a number of garden spiders under a large veranda, and was much interested in watching their habits. One day a violent storm arose, and the wind beat so furiously through the garden, that even though protected by the veranda, the spiders suffered terribly. In one case, one or two of the guy-ropes were broken, so that the web flapped about like a loose sail in a storm. The spider did not attempt to make new guy-ropes, but had recourse to a remarkable expedient.

It lowered itself to the ground by a thread, crawled along the ground to a spot where were lying some fragments of a wooden fence that had been blown down, the wood being quite decayed. To one of these fragments it attached its line, reascended, and hauled the piece of wood after it to the height of nearly five feet, suspending it by a strong line to its web. The effect was wonderful ; for the weight of the wood was sufficient to keep the net tolerably

tight, while it was light enough to yield to the wind, and so prevent further breakages. The wooden weight was just two inches and a half in length, and about the diameter of a goose-quill.

On the following day a careless servant struck her head against it, and knocked it down ; but in a few hours the spider had found and replaced it, thus proving that the occurrence was not accidental. After the stormy weather had ceased, the spider mended the web, cut the rope, and let the wooden weight fall to the ground.

I may mention that the spiders were mostly fed with little scraps of raw meat. They were accustomed to treat these morsels as if they had been flies, sucking the juice, and leaving the remainder in the web. It was rather curious that the rejected portions were still useful to the spiders, for they served to attract blue-bottle flies, which then became entangled in the webs, and were caught and eaten by the inmates.

I now subjoin a letter received from a lady who has always paid great attention to the experimental features of natural history, and delights in choosing for her pets the very creatures that would be thought most unfit for such a purpose. I first heard the story of the two butterflies some years ago, but have asked her to relate the account in her own words, knowing that a narrative always gains spirit when from the pen of an eye-witness.

‘Among the many pets that I have loved and

lost, few have endeared themselves more to me than my butterflies, two of which I once kept for the space of a year and a half.

‘They came into my possession when in their chrysalis state, and I, not knowing anything of entomology, shut them up for safety in a cabinet having glass doors. The cabinet stood near a small window in my bedroom. I was very unwell that winter, and therefore a fire was kept up in my room night and day. Therefore the room was very warm, and I suppose that the little butterflies were deceived thereby, and thought or dreamed that summer smiled upon the earth ; for, a few days after Christmas, to my astonishment and delight, a little yellow butterfly was seen fluttering feebly within the cabinet.

‘My attention was first diverted to the cabinet by the playful gambols of a pet pussy, who had mounted on a chair, and stood upon its hind-legs, pawing at the little creature through the glass. I soon sent pussy away, opened the cabinet, and tried to induce the butterfly to alight upon my hand. But it was either dazzled and bewildered at finding itself in its new and extended sphere of existence, or had already learned the fear of man ; for, at the approach of my hand, it flew wildly about, and finally settled down as if exhausted.

‘I now became most anxious to feed the little thing ; but how this was to be achieved I had not the slightest idea, nor could anyone in the house advise

or help me in this important matter. Moreover, I was loudly ridiculed for the bare idea of trying to tame and feed butterflies.

‘ However, I remembered that the poets all agreed in saying that butterflies sipped nectar from the open-



PLAYFUL GAMBOLS OF PUSSY.

ing flowers, and therefore turned my attention to the manufacture of a substitute for nectar; so having obtained some honey, which I diluted with rose-water, I put one drop into the centre of the open

blossoms of a fairy rose, and placed the little plant in the cabinet. I soon had the joy of seeing the little thing flutter around the rose, and finally settle upon it.

‘Whether it really drank or not I cannot say. I thought that it must have done so, as it appeared to grow stronger and more lively every day. I fed it in this manner for a fortnight; and by the end of that time it became so tame that it would step off the flowers or anything else on which it might be standing, and appear quite happy and at rest upon my hand.

‘It also appeared to understand that I wished it to come to me when I called it by the name of “Psyche,” that being the name which I had given to the insect.

‘About three weeks after the advent of Psyche, we were gladdened by the addition of another butterfly to our establishment—a peacock. He was strong and vigorous from the first, and flitted swiftly about, like a gleam of prismatic light. I used to fancy that they talked to each other, as he at once fell into the ways and habits of the other; and when I called Psyche, he too would come. I gave him another name; but he never seemed to understand that it belonged to him.

‘They lived in this way until the earth had donned her glowing summer robe of lilies and roses, when I was told that their life-power could only extend over

a month or two, and that it was cruel even to keep them as happy prisoners. I was therefore induced to give them their liberty. The cabinet was placed with opened doors before the window.

‘It was many days before the butterflies ventured to leave the window-sill, and this much to my joy, for I thought that it might be affection for me that held them back. However, one day, with many bitter tears, I saw them depart and join some wild companions ; but at night we found them again in the cabinet.

‘On the following morning they left us, and came not back again until the cold and stormy September weather set in.

‘Yet, when in the garden, they would come if I called them, and rest for a short time on my hair or hands. At length, on a cold windy day in September, we saw them on the window-sill, and on our opening the window they came in and resumed possession of their old quarters, and abode there for the winter.

‘It is true they were but poor-looking objects to what they were when they went forth. The world seemed to have used them somewhat roughly, for the sheen had gone from the rich wings of the peacock butterfly, and the soft yellow bloom from Psyche’s plumage. Nevertheless, they were welcome guests ; and though ragged and wayworn, were not the less loved.

‘We observed that during this winter they slept

more than they did formerly. They also manifested pleasure when sung or talked to, and were very fond of being waved about and danced up and down in the air, while they would sit upon the hand quite calmly. I think that the movement must have reminded them of the nodding flowers and fresh breezes of their summer life.

‘The sun and earth ran their appointed course, until they brought us to another bright June, and again I bestowed the boon of freedom on our fairy pets, who went forth gaily; but, alas! never to return. One day, after a heavy thunderstorm, we found the inanimate form of a yellow butterfly upon the window-sill. I took it up lovingly, and did my best to revive it; for I believed it to be the material form of my own beautiful Psyche, who had sought refuge from the storm, but found the window closed. Of this I cannot be sure, for all our efforts to restore her were in vain. The wondrous essence that had given it life, beauty, motion, affection, and memory, had returned to the hand of its mighty Creator, and with Him let it rest.

‘The peacock butterfly never returned; and whether he fell a prey to that aerial shark, the dragon-fly, or died of age, sickness, or forgot his early friends, I know not.

‘I have since tried to tame other butterflies, but never was so successful, although I have taught three or four to know me and to come at my call. Indeed, circumstances have never been so favourable, for I

never had any other butterflies in their chrysalis state, nor have a room and a cabinet been ready to receive them.

‘Taught by experience, I now almost dread to have the care of many pets, for their little lives are so full of dangers, that they become a constant source of anxiety rather than pleasure.’

I have since found that the butterfly in question was not a peacock, but a tortoiseshell, the writer of the above account not being an entomologist.

I may mention that this is not a solitary instance of a lepidopterous insect being tamed.

Rather more than two years ago, I received from a lady correspondent a letter, in which occurred the following passage:—

‘It may interest you to know that I have now (December 4, 1880) in the house a peacock butterfly which is quite a pet. It came in September, and at first was lively, and fed on honey and water, either off my hand or out of a silver spoon. It is now, however, very sleepy.’

Evidently, the butterfly, which had been kept awake by warmth and a regular supply of food, was obliged to yield to its instinct and prepare for hibernation.

The beautiful though sober-plumaged humming-bird moth has been so far accustomed to the presence of man as to permit itself to be touched without moving. Those who know the extreme

wariness of this moth, and the lightning-like speed with which it darts away at the least movement, can best appreciate the effect of human influences which could almost change the nature of this timid and sensitive being, and cause it to welcome rather than dread the approach of man.

Many insects can be rendered interesting pets ; and even the beetles, so foolishly dreaded by ignorant persons, present many points of interest.

The beautiful musk beetle (*Cerambyx moschatus*) is tolerably common in Kent, its powerful odour being strongly perceptible in many parts of the country, especially in the wooded sides of the road. One of these beetles was lately brought to me, having been found clinging to the 'chenille' hair-net of a young lady who was walking under the shade of the trees. Never having watched the habits of this creature, I determined to seize the opportunity, and to note its proceedings under the unfavourable circumstances in which it was placed.

Having but recently moved into the house, and being consequently unsettled, I could find no better habitation for it than a dry inkstand. Here it lived for a long time, continually making efforts to escape, and forcing me to place a tolerably heavy weight on the opening of the glass vessel. It was able to stretch its long limbs to a wonderful distance, and was remarkably expert at squeezing itself out of its glassy home.

It ate no food, but took large quantities of water, which it lapped in a way very like the method employed by the chameleon. I used to pour water on the window-ledge, and then place the beetle on the wet stone. It would immediately spread its legs very wide, press its head downwards, and begin to lap up the moisture with an orange-coloured tongue. The movement of this organ was somewhat circular, like that of a table-brush when sweeping crumbs together.

While drinking, it kept its beautiful antennæ pressed on the ground, but at the least alarm it sprang up and struck one of its antennæ towards the side from which it feared danger. Sometimes it would prick up both antennæ and assume a bold and defiant attitude, like that of an angry stag when threatening with its horns.

It was a fastidiously cleanly insect, and after being handled, took great pains to wash all its legs and antennæ. This it performed in rather a curious manner. The antennæ and fore-legs were passed repeatedly through the jaws, while the two hinder pairs of limbs were cleaned by mutual assistance, with an action wonderfully like that of a man washing his hands. The common house-fly employs nearly the same action.

I was rather anxious to ascertain whether the insect had any command over the powerful odour which exudes from it, and came at last to the con-

clusion, that while the beetle is in good health it is able to retain or emit the odour at pleasure; but that when weak, or after its death, it has no power of retention.

I know a case among my personal friends where a similar phenomenon takes place, and weakness or fatigue produces an overpowering scent of roses, which issues mostly from the hair, and the upper part of each shoulder, and is sometimes painfully oppressive. It will in a moment fill the house with its perfume, and clings so pertinaciously to any substance, that a handkerchief, which had been barely touched, retained the scent long after it had been washed. It is not nearly so annoying to the bystanders as to the patient, who finds that everything eaten or drunk tastes of this rosy odour. Even a bystander feels the influence pass deeply into the lungs, and cannot get the taste from the palate for some hours. I have had it cling to my own palate and nostrils for more than twenty-four hours.

In the case of this musk beetle, I found that it was for some time very chary of this perfume—which, by the way, though pleasant enough in the open air, is very oppressive in a room—for after a confinement of a week, not the least scent was perceptible in the vessel. Now and then, while walking about, it would throw out some of the perfume; but when it was evidently dying, the odour was continuous and exceedingly powerful. Even after its death the musky

odour was unpleasantly potent, and the glass vessel retained the scent for several weeks.

This seems to be a very interesting beetle through all its life. It is one of the wood-borers, preferring the dead willow trunks to those of any other tree. I have known these trees to be absolutely honey-combed with the tunnels of the musk beetles, and to be so deeply imbued with the peculiar odour, that a practised nostril would perceive them at a considerable distance. The larvæ are long, white, and rather deeply ringed grubs, with a very strong pair of jaws, and a horny head. I have taken numbers of them out of the trees by the simple process of cutting it down, and then splitting it to pieces with wedges. In this way may be obtained a perfect series of specimens, from the newly hatched larva to the perfect insect. I procured some of my best examples of the musk beetle by taking them from the wood before they had mixed with the world and lost their early bloom by contact with its rough ways.

I advise everyone who can obtain a musk beetle to examine its feet under the microscope. The lower surface of the foot should be chosen, so as to exhibit the beautiful pads on which it walks, and which enable it to cling so tightly, aided by the sharp grapnel of its claw. The pad is composed of a vast number of the tiniest imaginable papillæ, something like the multitudinous feet of the star-fish, and has a beautiful effect under a good binocular microscope with a half-inch

power. The claw, and the stiff hairs with which it is surrounded, is almost as beautiful, glittering like burnished metal, and the hairs flashing with every prismatic colour, gold predominating. And the whole of the surface is adorned with such wondrous magnificence, that the gorgeous fables of the 'Arabian Nights' sink into insignificance when compared with the living reality.

Whatever may be the position of a being in the scale of creation, I have found that it is more or less susceptible to human influences; and fully believe that, in most cases, if we fail in educating a higher intellect and more extended sympathies, the fault lies, not with the innate character of the beast, but in the imperfect efforts of the man. There are, of course, certain individuals who baffle all our efforts, who refuse to respond to kindness, and are only more hardened by severity, and who are, in fact, the criminals of the lower races. But, as a general rule, whenever man has set himself to work in the right way, he always succeeds, even with creatures apparently the most intractable.

What, for example, could be a harder task than to teach an ordinary pig to stand to game like a pointer; to train canaries and mice to act in concert and perform the most complicated manoeuvres; or to educate fleas to draw a vehicle and carry riders? Yet, all these tasks have been well performed, and it is likely that some of my readers may have witnessed some of

the feats to which I allude, but which our fast-waning space will not permit me to describe in full.

Beasts the most savage have been effectually tamed by the mysterious influence of the human will when rightly directed, and rendered as loving and gentle as those animals that are proverbial for their mild dispositions. The hyæna, that the showmen of travelling menageries *will* persist in asserting is untameable, has been proved to possess a temper as grateful and docile as that of a dog. The wolf, though so savage in its native state, attaches itself to a kind master with a strength of affection that is almost painful. The surly and ever-irritable bull has been known to lay aside its furious nature, and fawn lovingly upon the hand that has delivered it from a position of imagined peril and real terror. The leopard, when kindly treated, becomes playful and gentle as a puppy ; and even the ruthless tiger itself can be attached to man, and will learn to share his room as harmlessly as a cat.

The right education of pets is not a very easy matter, requiring a combination of qualities that are not very often found invested in the same person. The fortunate possessors of these qualities exercise an influence over their pets that seems almost magical in the rapidity with which it is gained, and the irresistible authority which it exerts. Quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, fishes, or insects yield themselves unresistingly to the invisible but all-potent influence, which

seems to attract them as the magnet attracts iron, and renders them utterly subservient to his loving will. Everyone must have noticed how the same influences are felt among human beings. We must all have been struck with the extraordinary mixture of love and reverence with which one schoolmaster will be contemplated by his pupils; how his lightest word commands instant obedience; how the lads will feel a pride and pleasure in anticipating his wishes and forwarding his plans; and how absolutely strict, and yet how easy, is the discipline of the school, the whole institution working as if permeated by one spirit.

Take, again, the very same school and the very same boys, under the very same circumstances; give them a teacher who may be a far better scholar than his predecessor, as kind-hearted a man and with a far more imposing presence, and yet you may find him systematically disobeyed and contemned, the boys going back in their studies, and the discipline of the school utterly ruined.

Still, although everyone may not be possessed of all the qualifications for a successful education, whether of human beings or those creatures which rank lower in the scale of animal life, all have the power of exercising kindness, or, at least, of abstaining from wanton cruelty.

Man is the highest being that the lower creatures can comprehend, and stands before them as a visible

deity, bearing in his hands illimitable power to bless, to injure, or to destroy. It is a high position, and carries with it no light responsibility. We are kings and emperors over the lower creation, and it rests with us, whether we shall be benevolent rulers, enabling them to develop the highest qualities of which they are capable; or whether we shall be heartless tyrants, forgetful that all created things are our fellow-beings, and, as such, have a claim upon our sympathy.

The Divine law of universal love endures no limits, and refuses to be confined within the narrow boundaries of creed, race, locality, or rank; and we are bound by the very conditions of existence to reflect, however feebly, the beams of Divine love so lavishly poured on ourselves.

Moreover, it is our interest as well as our duty to make all our fellow-creatures as happy as in us lies; for the great law of reciprocity holds good in this as in other conditions of material life. What a man sows he must reap; he who shows mercy obtains mercy; and he who best protects the many beings below him, may best look for protection from the One Being above, the All-Father, the Parent and Protector of all.

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